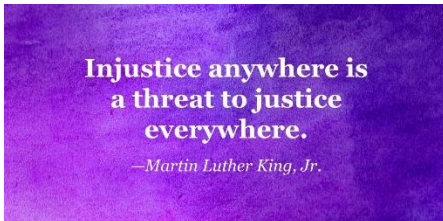


"The Grapevine"

February 2021



~~~~~  
*2021 "Per Capita"*

*\$25.90 per member*

~~~~~  
Online worship service for:



Wednesday, February 17th.
More details to come.

~~~~~  
**How to Join Livestream Worship and Devotions:**

**Facebook Live:**

[www.facebook.com/TracyFirstPres/live](https://www.facebook.com/TracyFirstPres/live)

**YouTube Live:**

[bit.ly/TFPC-PDA-YouTube-Live](https://bit.ly/TFPC-PDA-YouTube-Live)

**How to Join Zoom Socials or Meetings:**

**Computer or device:**

<https://zoom.us/j/7372716366?pwd=RUJBRnNMR2tUWWdhOGMzOFZRZWS9WZz09>

**Phone dial in:**

call (669) 900-9128,

enter meeting code 737 271 6366 when prompted,

enter passcode 209 232 5310 when prompted.



- 1- Georgiana Asah
- 2- Marie Patterson  
Helen Kelly
- 4- Dr. Sam Oh
- 5- Pat Brandes
- 6- Nicholas Weisenberger  
Christopher Weisenberger
- 8- Connor Winkler  
Charlie Mendoza
- 16- Kyle Link
- 17- Joel Pena
- 19- Cathy Weisenberger
- 22- Carolyn Gamino
- 23- Jinor Morikang  
John Morikang  
Johnathan Morikang
- 26- Phil DiFilippo
- 27- Roy Patterson  
Jim Kruse



KrazyInLove.com

- 11- Alex & Darline Pineda
- 24- Rick & Liz Hanson

## "PD's Pickings"

Happy Groundhog's Day!

You may or may not know that Shelley happens to be from Punxsutawney, PA, home of THE Groundhog (his name is Phil). Every year early in the morning on February 2nd a truly remarkable event takes place there, in a hallowed place called Gobbler's Knob.

As Phil is lifted out of his stump at Gobbler's Knob, hushed crowds await the sacred moment with bated breath. Then it happens: he whispers his prognostication, in "groundhogeese," into the ear of a very important-looking man in a black tux, top coat, and top hat, telling him whether or not he has seen his shadow. Suddenly we know! We can expect 6 more weeks of winter, or that spring is "just around the corner."

I'm not making this up: I've seen it with my own eyes.

You have to see it to believe it.

The most amazing part to me, though, is how every year the natural outdoor amphitheater at Gobbler's Knob is always packed with people huddling together like emperor penguins in what are often (very) negative wind chills, just to witness this strange spectacle, primed and ready to cheer excitedly when the prognostication is at last announced.

Except this year.

This year, the location will be closed from 5pm February 1st until 9am February 2nd. The town's pinnacle event will be—you guessed it—live-streamed instead. Our shared crisis reaches even to the hallowed stump of Gobbler's Knob. It's another reminder of how much loss we've incurred: not only the tangible and economic, but also the intangible and personal.

Of all the things we have lost or had to suspend in these times, perhaps the hug has been the hardest. No amount of saying "we're still the church" (and we are) or "we can still worship together" (and we can) or "we can still connect in other ways" (and we can) is a substitute for the tangible contact and care we were created to give and receive through hugs. There is something transcendent, enlivening, and unique about a simple hug. It conveys love like nothing else can. It warms the weary soul.

I like to think of myself as a realistic optimist. I do not believe in forced positivity or selectively ignoring reality, good or bad. But I believe there can always be optimistic outlooks despite those realities, because of what God will do. How we respond makes all the difference.

When our response arises from the love God gives us and wants to cultivate within us, we can look square-on at the facts, fully comprehend the implications, and trust God anyway—*faith*.

We can hold that faith because it is in the only sure, perfect, almighty, unfailing Person in the universe, rather than some temporary resource or circumstance—*hope*.

The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13:13, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." No matter what we face, or how much longer we have to face it, the source of our faith and hope in Christ is the Love of Christ: planted in us, driving us, squirting out of us. It is a love that

seeks the best possible outcome and greatest good for us and others. It is a love that shapes us and sustains us. It is a love that changes us.

Up above I remarked “you have to see it to believe it.” Yet for many things in life it is the reverse: *You have to believe it to see it.* God’s love is often in that category. Jesus understood this whenever he asked people he was about to heal if they believed, or afterward said “your faith has made you well.” The more we trust God’s love, the more we’ll experience God’s love, and the more it will give us hope. The more we believe it, the more we’ll see it.

As we yearn to clear our ever-mounting hug deficits, and ache for our sanctuary, our music, and our family of faith, it might be hard to find such renewal on some days. But even when we can’t feel God’s love, we can trust it. Covid or not, that is and will remain the difference between fearfully surviving and courageously thriving.

So, as we continue to sail through this storm together, let us recommit ourselves to the faith, hope, and *chesed* love of God, made most visible to us through Jesus Christ.

Believe it, and we will see it.

Shalom,



**TREASURER’S REPORT**

| General Fund:                           | <u>MONTHLY</u> | <u>TO DATE</u>       | <u>BALANCE</u> |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Reserve Fund not included in the budget |                | \$ 21,572.65         |                |
| Balance Forward                         |                | \$ 36,028.17         |                |
| Monthly Income                          | \$ 20,904.00   | \$ 140,090.47        |                |
| Monthly Expenditures                    | \$ 25,587.41   | <u>\$ 183,150.06</u> |                |
| Balance:                                |                |                      | \$ 14,541.23   |
| Special Fund Balance:                   |                |                      | \$ 20,548.76   |
| In-and-Out Fund Balance:                |                |                      | \$ 11,891.65   |
| Memorial Fund:                          |                |                      |                |
| Undesignated:                           |                | \$ 5,750.00          |                |
| Designated:                             |                | <u>\$ 12,545.69</u>  |                |
| Balance:                                |                |                      | \$ 18,295.69   |
| New Site Fund:                          |                |                      |                |
| Balance:                                |                |                      | \$ 1,350.16    |
| Synod Savings Account                   |                |                      |                |
| Matching Challenge                      |                | \$ 49,660.19         |                |
| Youth Reserve                           |                | \$ 1,085.48          |                |
| Manse Fund                              |                | \$ 62.38             |                |
| Julia Sturtevant Fund                   |                | <u>\$ 5,442.43</u>   |                |
| Balance:                                |                |                      | \$ 56,250.48   |

