

FALL 2022 CHIMES



A quarterly newsletter from Falls Church Presbyterian Church

Program year kicks off with a brunch and a bash!

FCPC's program year began September 11 with a well-attended Welcome Home Sunday worship service and catered brunch. It was the largest gathering of our church family since March 2020! This joyful event was followed by our first-ever community-wide Back-to-School Bash on September 17, which featured free school supplies, moon bounces, face painting, cotton candy, and more! *Additional photos on page 6.*



INSIDE

Pastor's letter	page 2
Good morning, Church!	page 3
Joining the Cloud of Witnesses	page 4
Crooked Steeple Literary Festival	page 5
New members	page 6
FCPC staff additions	page 7

Pastor's letter

Dear siblings in Christ,

As I write this, I'm enjoying some of the first hints of fall, cool crisp air and bright blue skies. Fall means a return to regular programming such as Godly Play, Youth Group, Sunday classes, and so on. Fall also brings with it yet another hope for a return to normalcy, and we did have a very good turnout for our Welcome Home Sunday on September 11. Along with that, choir has resumed with our new director of music, Don Armstrong, another sign of normalcy.

I certainly hope that the uptick in worship attendance that began on September 11 continues. After all, church is a corporate, community activity, something that sometimes gets lost in our very individualist society.

On many Sundays in our 10:45 service, and whenever we do a baptism or confirmation, we recite the Apostles' Creed together. As a part of that we say that we believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, and the communion of saints. These three things are intimately intertwined. It is the Spirit that creates the one catholic (meaning universal) church, and it is the Spirit that binds us together as the church and joins us to the communion of saints.

Communion of saints refers to something bigger than all the members of our church, or even all the members of every church in the world. This communion, this

intimate relationship, stretches backward and forward through time, uniting us with the saints, the believers, of every time and place.

This year's stewardship theme is "Joining the Cloud of Witnesses," and this phrase drawn from the book of Hebrews seems to refer to that communion of saints. The author of Hebrews speaks of work that is not finished, a fulfillment that does not quite arrive, without us. This is something bigger and more mystical than simply saying that we build on a foundation laid by those before us. It says that their efforts are not complete without us, that we are part of a great chain stretching back through time, and our efforts pull the entire chain forward.



Next year, 2023 will mark the 150th birthday of Falls Church Presbyterian Church. Some of that great cloud of witnesses began a work here all those years ago that remains unfinished. Members of the communion of saints stepped out in faith, but their acts of faith cannot come to full fruition without us.

In a time when church participation is declining and Christian faith is being twisted and distorted by people seeking political power, it can be easy to think that the church's best days are behind it. But the goal towards



James Sledge, Pastor

which we are called, the finish of the race we are urged to run with perseverance, is still ahead of us. And the faithful who went before us, the saints to whom we are joined by the Spirit, are counting on us to keep the faith moving towards its final destination, God's new day on earth.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:1-2) Let us recommit ourselves to the work Jesus calls us to do, the work that remains undone without us. The saints and witnesses of 1873 are counting on us.

Grace and peace in Christ,



Good morning, Church!

Fall is my favorite season. I am always relieved when summer, having overstayed its welcome, finally moves on. The break in temperatures, the changing colors of the leaves, programs picking back up again—everything associated with fall promises renewed energy and community.

This year is no different. September began with a whirlwind of Welcome Home Sunday and brunch, a Back to School Bash, and the start of spiritual growth activities for all ages. Deacons kicked off the year with a visioning process where they pledged honesty, transparency, and accountability; and identified re-connecting our community as a priority for the year. The Back to School Bash was one such gift to the greater community. Trunk-Or-Treat on October 29 will be another gift.

LGBTQIA+ activities

Over the summer some deacons and I were in touch with Rev. Emilee Williams, the director of Arise, which is the only LGBTQIA+ affirming Christian ministry on George Mason University's campus. In August, Deacon Kathy Chavez delivered over 200 cookies to Arise to distribute during the first week of school. You can read Emilee's thank you note on page 4.

Good morning, Church! continues on page 4

Food insecurity has been identified as an issue for many students at GMU, so Arise began adding dinner to their Wednesday night worship, called Food for Thought, in October. Several FCPC deacons and staff provided a homecooked meal for 20 students on Wednesday, October 26. Many thanks to Sam Beatty for providing drinks, Kathy Chavez for bringing salad, Linda Garvelink for providing meatballs, Tom Koger for his homemade spaghetti sauce, and Marsha Schuyler for supplying garlic bread.

Another way we might support LGBTQIA+ students is by hosting some for Thanksgiving or giving them a place to stay over the holidays. Some of these students are estranged from their families because of their gender or sexuality, so they no longer have homes to go to when the university closes. Let me know if you want to know more.



Kathy Chavez delivers cookies to GMU



Megan Klose, Associate Pastor

I will soon be meeting with parents of LGBTQIA+ kids to choose what we want to do as a group. We have many options, ranging from Queer Theology workshops to a study for parents from The Reformation Project, to simply talking about issues we are dealing with. If you are interested in joining us, please contact me at mklose@fallschurchpresby.org.



First day cookies at Arise table

Joining the Cloud of Witnesses

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us. This scripture from the twelfth chapter of Hebrews inspired the Generosity Team this year so much that we made it the theme for FCPC's fall campaign. That verse concludes a litany of Hebrew men and women who were faithful to God's call. The interesting thing is that this roll call of saints included not just the patriarchs we would expect, like Abraham and Moses, but also Rahab the prostitute, who did not die at the fall of Jericho, but secured life for herself and her family because "she had received the spies in peace." Wow!

Many have come before us at FCPC to make us the faith community that we are. We trust that many will come after. In your own life, we also trust that you have a cloud of witnesses that has surrounded you—from the past, present, into the future—strengthening and encouraging you in your faith journey. Good people of FCPC, this is our time. Our time to be part of that great cloud of witnesses here and now, using our time, treasure, our talents to do the work of Christ for a hurting world. Thanks be to God that all have been called to join. Let us run with perseverance the race set before us.

Good morning, Church! continued from page 3

Dear Falls Church Presbyterian,

It is wild to believe we are now six weeks into the semester and nearing mid-terms and fall break! As we have caught our breath and settled into a routine, we cannot miss a chance to thank you for the impact you've had through your thoughtfulness during the first week of school.

In late August, your church generously baked and donated dozens upon dozens of cookies for students at GMU. We displayed them at all of our first week kiosk events with a shoutout to Falls Church Pres. Over and over, students would come up to our table and ask, "these are free?" ... "Wow, people made these for us?" ... "This is exactly what I needed to start my first week, thank you!" On a few occasions, students found our table solely because we had cookies, but their interaction ended in heartfelt tears as students felt loved, heard, and — of course — nourished with yummy cookies.

As students are preparing for midterms, know that you have played in a role in carrying them through; for, as we know, the feeling of being cared for and thought of is one that lasts long past that first act of kindness. It is remembered and savored for a long time to come.

Thank you for helping to carry students at George Mason and Arise.

*Rev. Emilee Williams
Director of Community & Spiritual Growth
Arise Campus Ministry, George Mason University
emilee@arisegmu.org*



Arise Campus Ministry is an inclusive and affirmative ministry on campus devoted to meaningful faith formation, building community, and creating a safe space for students of all backgrounds. While GMU has 25 campus ministries active at the university, Arise is currently the only LGBTQ+ affirming Christian ministry on campus. We encompass Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, and Episcopal denominations. We offer various programming throughout the week at various times to accommodate students all throughout the population: on-campus students and commuters, religiously formed or new to faith, and more. For more information, visit our website at <https://arisegmu.org>.

Crooked Steeple Literary Festival

The Spiritual Growth Ministry Team has secured three guest authors to be interviewed and to read their work as part of FCPC's Crooked Steeple Literary Festival. Admission is free and open to the community. Register to attend at <https://linktr.ee/crookedsteeple>. Authors will have their books for sale at the event and will be happy to sign them.

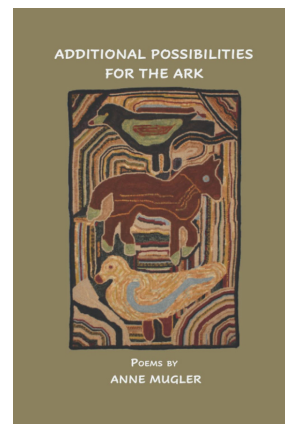


Anne Mugler November 12, 2022

The first author is FCPC's own Anne Mugler, who will read from her debut book of poetry, *Additional Possibilities for the Ark*. Many of Anne's poems are paired with images of hooked rugs Anne has designed and made herself. Anne will be interviewed about writing poetry and some of her rugs will be on display.



Anne Mugler

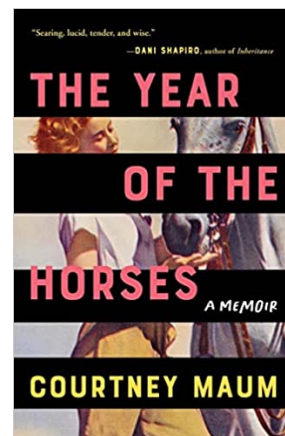


Courtney Maum February 25, 2023

Next, emerging author Courtney Maum will read from and talk about her memoir, *The Year of the Horses*, an inspiring love letter to the power of animals—and humans—to heal the mind and hearts. Maum is the author of the novels *Costalegre*; *Touch*; and *I Am Having So Much Fun Here Without You*; and a guide for writers, *Before and after the Book Deal*. Her writing and essays have been widely published in such outlets as *The New York Times*; *O, the Oprah Magazine*; *Interview Magazine*; and *Modern Loss*.

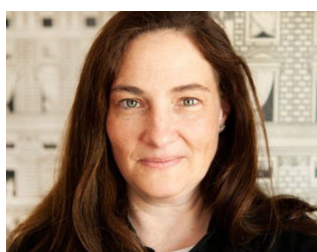


Courtney Maum

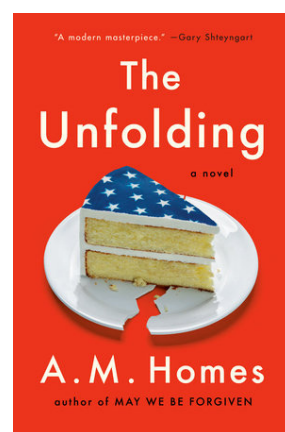


A.M. Homes April 15, 2023

The third author is international award winner A.M. Homes, one of the most provocative literary voices today. She will read from and talk about her newest novel, *The Unfolding*, a stunning alternative history that is both terrifying prescient, deeply tender, and devastatingly funny. Homes won the 2013 Woman's Prize for Fiction for her novel, *May We All Be Forgiven*. Her writing frequently appears in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Harper's*, and *Elle*. She is a contributing editor to *Vanity Fair* and *Bomb*. In addition, she has written for TV and film.



A.M. Homes



New members

Callie Hawkins

Callie Hawkins joined FCPC on August 21, 2022, by letter of transfer from Cherokee Avenue Baptist Church in Gaffney, South Carolina. Callie is married to Jason Hobbie and they are the parents of Coley James Hobbie, and Fletcher Hayes Hobbie, born December 6, 2021, and baptized at Falls Church Presbyterian on August 21, 2022. Callie is the director of programming at President Lincoln's Cottage in Washington, DC. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her family and traveling. Welcome, Callie!



Fletcher Hobbie and Callie Hawkins

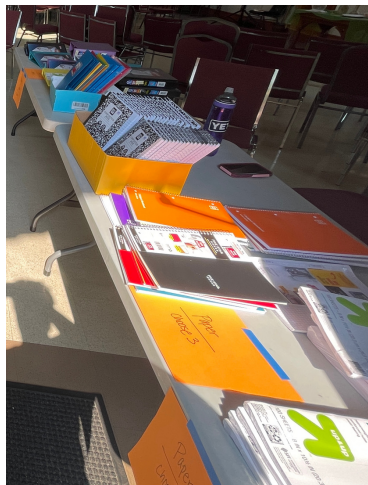
Fletcher Hayes Hobbie

Fletcher Hayes Hobbie is our newest baptized member, joining the body of Christ on August 21, 2022. Welcome, Fletcher!

Program year kicks off, continued from page 1

Back-to-school Bash and Youth Kickoff

Following the Back-to-School Bash on Sept. 17 was the Youth Kickoff on Sunday, Sept. 18. Youth and their parents shared dinner together and then competed in a series of games, including a whipped cream challenge and Alaskan baseball. The youth took home the victory once again this year!



FCPC staff additions

Dr. Donald Armstrong, director of music

Don Armstrong joined FCPC as director of music on September 1. With more than 20 years experience as Director of Music for various churches, Don enjoys leading congregations in worshipping God through music. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in voice and conducting, a master's in music education, and a master's in educational administration and supervision. He is currently an administrator for a high school in Prince William County. Don has served as a choral director at every level from elementary to university. When not working at school or church, Don is a proud dog dad to Alfie, a 3.5-year-old Shichon; Archie, a 1.5-year-old Bichon-Poo; and Regina, a 1-year-old Morkie-Poo.



Don Armstrong

Ronald Conti, facilities manager

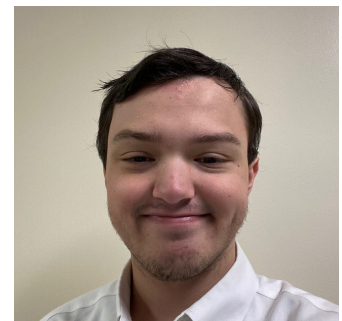
Ron Conti became our newest facilities manager on October 21. On his fifth day of employment, Ron was greeted with a water pipe break in the ceiling that flooded the first floor between the conference room and bathrooms, subsequently leaking down to the basement level. Talk about baptism by fire! Ron is dad to Giulia, 25, and Sergio, 24, and enjoys cooking authentic Italian food for his kids and working out at the gym with them. Ron is a big sports fan and still roots for his hometown Cleveland sports teams. He looks forward to connecting with the local Italian culture and getting to know the DC sports scene. Ron and his kids are the parents of a 15-year-old Lhasa Apso named Martin, also known as Chicho Lilo.



Ron Conti

Alex Hess, media producer

Alex Hess joined FCPC on August 21 to assist with our audio/video production and livestream Sunday morning worship services. Alex is a graduate of Northern Virginia Community College with an associates degree in film. He enjoys watching and making films in his free time. Alex is a huge sports fan and cheers on all DC sports. When not at FCPC on Sundays, Alex serves as a waiter during the week at Falcons Landing Senior Living in Sterling, Va.



Alex Hess

Welcome, Don, Ron, and Alex!

Mark your calendar!



Do you have a story or photos to share in our next issue of *Chimes Online*?
Send to chimes@fallschurchpresby.org. Deadline for the winter 2022 issue is November 30.

225 E. Broad Street, Falls Church, VA 22046 | www.fallschurchpresby.org | 703-532-6518