

WINTER 2023 CHIMES



A quarterly newsletter from Falls Church Presbyterian Church

Advent and Christmas festivities at FCPC

Holiday Hangout and Christmas Market

Community Building Ministry hosted a Holiday Hangout and Christmas Market on December 10. Sales from the Christmas Market—\$761—went to support FCPC's Welcome Table program. Many donned their best Christmas sweaters and enjoyed a pot luck dinner, an outdoor labyrinth, and s'mores and caroling by a firepit in the front parking lot.

FCPC deacons, youth, and staff celebrate the season



Fellowshipping at the Holiday Hangout



FCPC Deacons hard at work



Youth Christmas party

Watch Night Falls Church



FCPC hosted 180 guests, including more than three dozen children, at the City of Falls Church Watch Night on New Year's Eve. Despite the City's cancellation of outdoor activities because of the rainy forecast, it was a grand evening thanks to all who volunteered and the many guests who joined us! Entertainment included the Northern Lights Swing Band, vintage photo ops in the parlor sponsored by the Victorian Society of Falls Church, and a face painter for children.

Additionally, FCPC members supported the Fairfax County Services Hypothermia Shelter, hosted by our friends at Knox Presbyterian, by providing a New Year's Eve dinner to the shelter guests. Watch for more opportunities when it is our turn to host in March!



Staff Christmas lunch at Panjshir

INSIDE

Pastor's letter	page 2
Good morning, Church!	page 3
Crooked Steeple Literary Festival	page 5
Eagle Scout Project Chuck Hobbie publishes book	page 6
Confirmation Class of 2022 Lent at FCPC	page 7
Escape Weekend 2022	page 8

Pastor's letter

Dear siblings in Christ,

It feels a little strange to sit down to write this Chimes letter/article. Typically I would talk about the upcoming stewardship season or the move to a post Covid environment or some other event or activity in the life of the congregation. But now I am writing knowing that this newsletter will barely have been published before I am no longer the pastor here. So what do I say when I know that the future here doesn't include me?

Perhaps one thing I can do is to assure you that FCPC will keep on keeping on. A church is not its pastor. Pastors, like elders and deacons and others in the church, have a role to play, but the real strength of the church is in its members. It is members who sing in the choir, who keep Welcome Table going, who show up for the Shout Out for Justice, and more. All of those things will continue without me just as they did while I was here.

FCPC will celebrate its 150th birthday this year, and it has seen a long list of pastors come and go over the years. Hopefully this congregation will be around for another 150 years, and during that time many more pastors will come and go. The constant will be the people who make up the church.

Churches do seem to like having pastors, however, and we are fortunate that Megan Klose is on staff and is willing to work full time until a transitional pastor joins her. Sermons will still get preached, Session meetings will be moderated, and pastoral care will be provided. You needn't worry. You are and will be in good hands.

And as you've likely heard by now, my successor is not the two and a half years away that many people feared. A pastor nominating committee should be interviewing prospective new pastors by this summer, and your new pastor should arrive within a year, maybe less. Meanwhile, you'll be busy keeping FCPC humming along, and the time will pass quickly.

All that time, I'll be thinking about you and praying for you, and I will miss you. I'll miss the conversations during fellowship time. I'll miss the discussions in Bible study. I'll miss the energy and passion that people brought to various ministry teams. I'll miss handing out gift cards at Welcome Table and talking to all the people who make Welcome table work. I'll even miss meetings. There have been hard and difficult meetings here and there, but mostly I have



James Sledge, Pastor

fond memories of gathering to discuss and plan the worship, ministry, and life of this congregation.

Before I miss you, however, there will be time for goodbyes. As I write this there are still more than three weeks before I depart, and so I'll have a great deal of time to say them. And if for some reason I don't get the chance to speak directly to you, know that I wish you the fondest farewell.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your pastor, and may God bless and keep you as you move into a new future.

Grace and peace in Christ,

Good morning, Church!

I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord ... to give you a future filled with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

With the new year, I am naturally looking forward to what is coming up in the church calendar. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22, and will carry us through April 9 to Holy Week and Easter. In looking forward, I am reflecting back on the Advent and Christmas season so fresh behind us. It felt like a rich and full time. I am hoping we can experience that same depth in the season to come.

A few things stand out to me about Advent and Christmas. It was lovely to have various friends and families lead lighting the Advent candles. It was especially poignant to have your words in those liturgies. Each week we asked a different question that could be answered lightly or more vulnerably. Some of your responses resonated with particular authenticity, which lent depth and immediacy to our worship.

Low-stakes Advent crafts between Sunday services provided space for folks to chat and play. These were intergenerational activities, so parents could visit while they lightly supervised their kids or worked with them side by side. Sometimes it was adults only. Each week we left with a simple, satisfying little piece of art.

These structured activities enhanced the season because they invited us all to join in some way, as we could, at our own comfort level. I heard that some of our youngest disciples in particular were delighted to hear their words in worship. I hope to continue to find ways to create worship that is at once universally Christian and specific to FCPC. I also hope we continue to offer drop-in activities during the 9:30 hour. Please let me know if you have an activity you would like to see happen on Sunday morning.



Megan Klose, Associate Pastor



The Brown family lights the 3rd Advent candle



Advent Wreaths:

We created Advent wreaths to help us prepare for the coming of Christ's birth.



Flexible Sculptures:

Just as Joseph was flexible in responding to the situation God gave him, we made sculptures out of flexible wire and miscellaneous supplies.



Watercolor Stars:

We made these simple and pretty stars by painting watercolor paper with watercolor and gold paint, then cutting them into star shapes.

Good morning, Church! continued from page 3



God with Us Weavings:

God is the warp of our lives — the stable framework. Our lives are the weft — unique weavings of experience around and with God. We made these God with Us Weavings using a variety of ribbons and strips of fabric attached and woven onto wooden frames.

Ash Wednesday is February 22

We will begin Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 22, with a communal supper in Fellowship Hall at 6:45 p.m. Dinner will be followed by a service in the sanctuary at 7:30 p.m. with the imposition of ashes. Sign up for dinner [here](#) so we know how much food to provide.

Wednesday night Soup and Scripture class for Lent

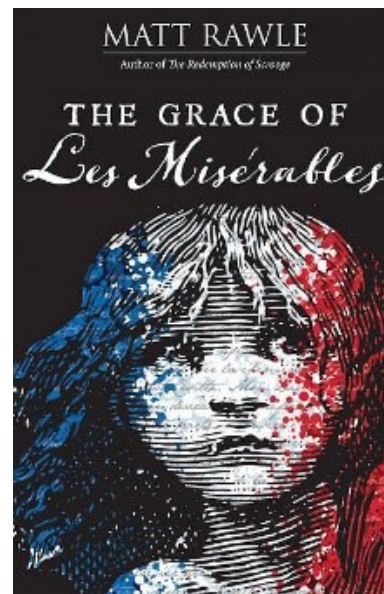
During Lent the Spiritual Growth team will offer Wednesday night Soup and Scripture from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The class is “The Grace of Les Miserables,” written by Rev. Matt Rawle. Each week we will examine a different aspect of grace portrayed in *Les Mis*. We will share a simple soup supper then move into discussion. You can watch a preview of the class [here](#). Everyone will be invited to watch *Les Mis* together before the series begins. Please sign up for the class [here](#) so we know how much food to prepare.

Services for Holy Week

Holy Week begins with worship on Palm Sunday, April 2. Plans are developing for this service. On Maundy Thursday, April 6, we will gather for a soup supper with communion at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. We will post a sign up for dinner soon. In anticipation of the passion of Good Friday, dinner will be followed by a Tenebrae service in the sanctuary at 7:30. We expect to have a sunrise service in Frady Park on Easter Sunday, followed by regular worship inside. More details about these services to come.

As you can see, although we will have a change in pastoral leadership in February, our life as a congregation will continue into the next season with new offerings and beloved traditions. I hope you are looking forward to what we will do next together as much as I am.

Blessings,
Pastor Megan



Crooked Steeple Literary Festival

A new ministry has begun! The Crooked Steeple Literary Festival welcomed FCPC's own Anne Mugler to the podium on November 12, 2022. Anne read from her debut poetry book, *Additional Possibilities for the Ark*. This wonderful event follows in the long FCPC tradition of storytelling and community service. We welcomed 70+ people on a Saturday afternoon to hear Anne read her poems and be interviewed about her process of writing, poetry as storytelling, and how it intersects with her career as a psychotherapist. The enthusiastic audience had the opportunity to ask questions, which was also quite entertaining. Following the reading and interview, there was time for mingling and conversation as well as book selling and signing. The Community Building Ministry Team provided delicious refreshments.



Reading and interview



Captivated audience



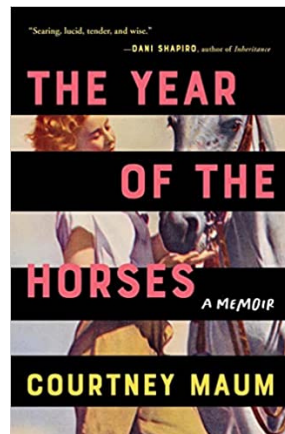
Book signing

Wouldn't you like to be a part of this new thing we are doing? This is a great opportunity to invite a friend, your book club, or a young person to come celebrate all things literary. Our next guest author is Courtney Maum on Saturday, Feb. 25. Her new book, *The Year of the Horses*, is a fascinating memoir about overcoming life's challenges through riding horses. On Saturday, April 15, we will welcome our final author of the season, A.M. Homes, reading from her book, *The Unfolding*, a satirical novel of political intrigue.

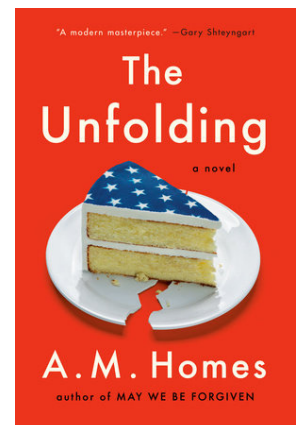
Admission to the Crooked Steeple events is free and open to the public, though donations are appreciated. Register to attend at <https://linktr.ee/crookedsteeple>. Authors will have their books for sale at the event and will be happy to sign them.



Courtney Maum



A.M. Homes



Eagle Scout Project: Contemplative garden space

Meridian High School senior and FCPC member Owen Bruce (pictured below) completed his Eagle Scout project in November. Working closely with former Facilities Manager John Loyd, Owen and his fellow Boy Scouts from Troop 1996 logged 101 hours to create a stone walkway and bench near a flower bed on the Broad Street side of the church. He hopes it will be a place where people can rest and enjoy our beautiful gardens. Our Welcome Table guests have also enjoyed using the space. Well done, Owen!

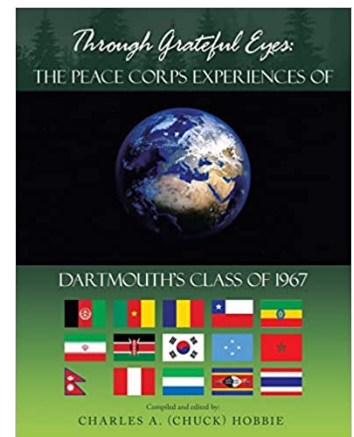


Chuck Hobbie publishes fourth book

Through Grateful Eyes: The Peace Corps Experiences of Dartmouth's Class of 1967

FCPC elder Chuck Hobbie recently published *Through Grateful Eyes: The Peace Corps Experiences of Dartmouth's Class of 1967*. Forty-three members of Chuck's all-male college class, plus eight spouses, served in the Peace Corps. The book sets forth in their own words what 19 of them did overseas as volunteers in 15 different countries in the earliest years of the Peace Corps—in programs of health, education, forestry, agriculture, architecture, tourism, conservation, hydrology, marketing, engineering, law, rural development, and urban development. Each describes the people with whom they lived and worked, the challenges they met and overcame, and how they were changed by their experience while pursuing their mission of world peace and friendship.

Chuck's previously published books include: *Days of Splendor, Hours like Dreams—Four Years at a Small College in the Far North* (a memoir of Chuck's college years, work in Sweden, and study in France); *The Time of the Monkey, Rooster, and Dog—A Peace Corps Volunteer's Years in Korea 1968-1971* (Congressional Commendation awarded at the Library of Congress, September 2011); and *Buffalo Wings* (a childhood memoir). All are available online.



Chuck Hobbie

Confirmation Class of 2022, Lent at FCPC



Class of 2022 confirmands, from left: Ellie Bruce, Caitlin Good, Nora Stufft, Emily Borum, Elena Clark-Wilson, Ethan Moore



Celebrating confirmands with cake!

In worship on December 4, FCPC welcomed Emily Borum, Ellie Bruce, Elena Clark-Wilson, Caitlin Good, Ethan Moore, and Nora Stufft into membership at FCPC through profession of faith. Their confirmation journey was different than those of the past as they engaged in a new process. The objective was for them to know God in their hearts, not just know a lot about God. Through their journey, they participated in three major events: a spring retreat to Lake Anna, a service learning experience with City|Service|Mission in Nashville, Tennessee, and our Escape Weekend at Shrine Mont. Their journey through confirmation culminated in the worship service on December 4, but their lives of faith and devotion to FCPC and the Church universal is just beginning.

Lent at FCPC

Ash Wednesday, February 22

6:45 Soup Supper

7:30 Worship with imposition of Ashes

"The Grace of Les Miserables" Soup & Scripture

6:30 Wednesdays, March 1 through April 5

Maundy Thursday dinner & Tenebrae service, April 6

6:30 Soup Supper

7:30 Tenebrae



Escape Weekend 2022

In November, 64 adults, youth, and children from FCPC enjoyed a weekend at Shrine Mont, in Orkney Springs, Virginia, the Camp and Conference Center of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. This was our third retreat to Shrine Mont, and a glorious time was had by all!



Do you have a story or photos to share in our next issue of *Chimes Online*?
Send to chimes@fallschurchpresby.org. Deadline for the spring 2023 issue is March 10.

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