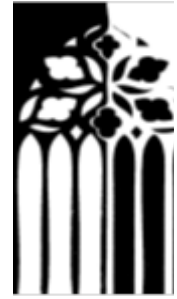


Voice of the Spire

The Newsletter of Arch Street United Methodist Church
A Reconciling Congregation



Winter 2018

Arch Street United Methodist Church

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Voice of the Spire

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Rev. Reinhard Kruse
Charlie Meyers
Rhonda Moore
Dale Shillito
Audra Wolfe

The Trustees Work to Maintain God's Building

Russ Alexander, Chair, ASUMC Trustees



As stewards of God's building, one of our Trustees' duties is to protect public safety. One aspect of this duty is a requirement of the City of Philadelphia: for any building over 60 feet tall and constructed prior to 1950 (this means ASUMC), we must submit a report indicating the condition of the entire façade—the exterior surface—of the building.

In August 2017, after a two-day inspection, the Trustees received a draft report from the engineering firm we hired. Their findings:

1. The three decorative masonry architectural details on the Arch Street side ("finials") must be removed.
2. The spire requires a hands-on inspection that can only be performed from a 250-foot crane.
3. Several other items identified during the August inspection must be repaired.

The Church Council accepted the Trustees' recommendation that we invest approximately \$250,000 in these projects. The investment will be funded by a loan secured against the ASUMC endowment. The planning work has begun, and we hope physical work will start in January 2018.

Assuring the safety of the building is not a one-shot deal. It requires an investment in continual maintenance. We will need an ongoing program to assure the continued safety of the façade into the future. This is true not only because of our duty as stewards of the public safety, but because we must provide the same report to the City of Philadelphia every five years from now on.

We learned a lesson from the outcome of the planning and construction of the parking garage next door: nothing is impossible with God! If we truly come from a perspective that puts the Kingdom of God first, and earnestly and patiently explain our needs, God will send the things, people, and resources to make our dreams a reality.

Maybe God wants to work through you! Please support this project with your donations and prayers. Your contribution should be marked "Façade repair fund." We also intend to pursue other sources of money to fund this work.

Thank you for your support, and please contact any of the Trustees if you have questions.

News & People



Javier Leaves Sanctuary

Charlie Meyers

To the delight of his wife, kids, and many friends and supporters, Javier Flores Garcia left sanctuary on Wednesday morning, October 11th, after spending eleven months living in a room off Nichols Hall at ASUMC. His deportation order was lifted and now Javier will pursue a special visa for assisting the police while being a victim of a crime. Javier is now able to rejoin his family and no longer risk deportation by I.C.E.

His case was a rare win within the Sanctuary movement, bringing hope to those facing deportation. It attracted the attention of media including the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and ABC News, among others.

Throughout the day, his little boy, Javier Jr., ran through the halls of our church in delight, waiting for everything to be over, happy for his Dad to finally come home.

Suffice it to say, it was a very good day!

Why POWER Matters

Audra Wolfe

I had seen references to POWER events in Arch Street bulletins for years, but my first real-life exposure to the organization came through a Black Lives Matter protest outside Lincoln Financial Field in December 2014. I had been shocked and appalled at the string of police killings of unarmed black men and women, but, like so many white Americans, I didn't really know where to begin. POWER's explicit embrace of an interracial, interfaith approach created a space where all people committed to justice could stand together.

The event was an extraordinarily powerful moment. Hundreds of POWER supporters and Black Lives Matter activists gathered outside the stadium, singing songs until the football game ended. When a signal came, we all lay down in the street. The crowd was hostile and the ground was cold. I realized, as I lay there, that this situation was now truly in God's hands. POWER gave the hundreds of participants the courage to show up and

the spiritual strength to carry out the action.

There is so much to be angry about in today's political climate. When I work with POWER, more so than any other group, I feel a moral imperative to center my actions on a sense of justice—not just rage. I recently joined POWER's new Climate Justice Strategy Team. Climate change is a *justice* issue, and climate change is a *now* issue. Whether it's Philadelphia's asthma epidemic or flooding in Houston or hurricane damage in Puerto Rico, we see over and over again that climate change and extreme weather disproportionately affect communities of color and people living in poverty. In Philadelphia, we're working to convince PECO to transition to a clean energy policy that creates good-paying green jobs in areas that have been hit hard by environmental racism. An economy based on justice instead of extraction benefits us all.

If you are curious to know more about POWER's Climate Justice work, please speak with me at church or contact me at audrajwolfe@gmail.com.

Greetings from China!

Nicola Jefferson

Editor's Note: Last summer, our good friend and long-time Arch Street member Nicola Jefferson surprised us with the news that she was moving abroad to become assistant principal of an international school in Shenzhen, in the south of China near Hong Kong. Ignoring the time difference, she stays connected to Arch Street by calling in to the Sunday morning Bible Study. We asked her to tell us about her new life halfway around the world.

My Dear Arch Street Family,

As I type this note out on my phone—my computer has died—I am reminded of the adage, “If there's a will, there's a way.” I am thankful that God makes a way for us regardless of our will, and that my not being able to type this on a computer does not prevent me from writing. ☺

All in all, I am very happy to be here and that I've made this huge move. I miss you all and will be glad when the time changes there so I can participate in Sunday School again via Skype. As it stands now, it's 11:30 at night my time when the class begins and I have to get to bed to get up by 6 o'clock the next day.

Among the top things that have struck me about China are the following.

Safety—How safe it is here has blown me away. I noticed on my ride in from the airport that a woman was riding a bike alone on the street at 2 o'clock in the morning. While I am able to walk at all times of the day or night, I do try to be mindful of the time and my surroundings.

Relationships—When I first arrived, the scenes I saw of people outside amazed me as much as the apparent absence of crime. Friends of the same gender freely hold hands or link arms as they walk down the street laughing, talking, or just simply walking. It is very common to see guys carrying their girlfriends' purses and couples displaying affection for each other (no kissing or anything inappropriate).

Children—Children and babies and toddlers are everywhere! It's very heartwarming to see. Grandparents and parents dote on them, and all the malls seem

to have fairly elaborate activities for children such as little cars, masses of plastic balls for them to play in and with, merry-go-rounds, arts and crafts tables, and so on. Shenzhen is very child- and family-friendly.

Ways of thinking and doing—This category is the most fascinating for me. I don't think I'll ever get bored or tire of being surprised and faced with new things. I like to speak of Aristotle meeting Confucius; Lines versus Circles; the Abstract versus the Concrete; Relationships, Relationships, Relationships! As with all generalizations, the above is not rigidly set in stone and there is, of course, some interplay.

Well, that's it for now. Writing this on my phone has been harder than I thought it'd be. I leave you with a picture.



Making Arch Street a “Radically Inclusive” Congregation

Michael Bowman

Late in the Spring of 2017, I was invited to sit on the Radically Inclusive Task Force and gathered with five others around the conference room on the second floor of the church. We were tasked with crystalizing what it means for ASUMC to be a Radically Inclusive congregation.

Two words stood behind our discussions: *attitude* and *action*. What heart attitude makes us Radically Inclusive? How does that translate into measurable outcomes and actions?

Being Radically Inclusive means in every aspect of life and that we are “open to difference with an active suspension of judgment.” We endeavor to embrace every person no matter how different they are from us racially, financially, politically, in status, position, or lifestyle. We choose to stop ourselves in our tracks when we have a negative gut reaction to someone, and choose to don the humility and love of Christ in place of snap judgments.

We always want to be found welcoming, affirming, and embracing diversity. And we want to publicly make that known! We want everyone who passes by Arch Street or finds us on the Web to know we are Radically Inclusive people who actively advocate for others and extend tangible expressions of love.

To that end, we will be featuring our new logo on an outside banner early in 2018 and will be utilizing that logo on our bulletin, publications, and outreach materials:



Being Radically Inclusive, though, is not about logos, banners, and publications—it is about love in action. Our continued efforts in advocating and seeking justice for others, in providing meals for the hungry, in building community within the congregation, and welcoming and incorporating visitors into the body, all support our message of being a Radically Inclusive congregation.

The task force is currently engaged in deciding on a tag line that will present a brief summary statement to work in conjunction with the logo. We will then complete the design work on an external banner and other materials. Within the first 90 days of the new year, we expect to be actively engaging the congregation in the Radically Inclusive initiative.

Columns

Minister's Message



Rev. Robin Hynicka,
Senior Pastor

"The church has died and risen before. It's just that you and I thought we would be following God in a time of living. Instead, we are being faithful in a time of dying. But when we give in to death, then the Jesus Insurgency begins, and then we are able to rise up to God's way."—From the last chapter of the book titled *Jesus Insurgency: The Church Revolution from the Edge*, written by United Methodist Pastors Dottie Escobedo-Frank and Rudy Rasmus. This provocative book will form the basis of our Lenten Season this year.

"Jesus Insurgency" is the theme for ASUMC's 2018 Lenten Series, which begins with an Ash Wednesday Service on February 14th at 12:00 noon in the Prayer Chapel. That's right, Ash Wednesday is on Valentine's Day, and the ASUMC com-

munity will celebrate the radical and all-inclusive love of God.

The Lenten Series will continue on each Wednesday leading up to Holy Week. The sessions will be held in the Prayer Chapel at noon. Each Wednesday, those gathered will pray, sing, read scripture, and share in spiritual conversation centered on the chapters of the book:

February 21: "At the Crossroads"

February 28: "The Insurgent"

March 7: "The Church Revolution"

March 14: "From the Edge"

March 21: "Postscript"

The Holy Week schedule will include our participation in the Philadelphia Connection of United Methodist Churches revival services on Monday, March 26th, Tuesday, March 27th, and Wednesday, March 28th. The ASUMC traditions of Holy Thursday Tenebrae (March 29th at 7:00 PM) and Good Friday laity interpreting the Seven Last Words of Christ (March 30th at 12:00 noon) will continue.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the book *Jesus insurgency: The Church Revolution from the Edge*, please contact the church office at 215-568-6250 or secretary@archstreetumc.org.

Dottie Escobedo-Frank earned her Master of Divinity from Claremont School of Theology and her Doctor of Ministry in Semiotics and Future Studies from George Fox Evangelical Seminary. Dottie is an elder in the Desert Southwest Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, where she serves as the District Superintendent of the South District. She is a speaker and writer, and her work has centered on church revitalization, worship and preaching, and multicultural ministry. Dottie is the author of *Converge: Our Common Sins*, *Jesus Insurgency* with Rudy Rasmus, *ReStart Your Church*, *Sermon Seeds*, *Advent and Christmas*, and the *Igniting Worship* Series.

Rudy Rasmus is an author, pastor, street ethicist, and global humanitarian with a passion for outreach to our world's most impoverished citizens. He co-pastors St. John's Church in downtown Houston with his wife Juanita. St. John's is one of the most culturally diverse congregations in the country, where every week people of every social and economic background share the same pew. Since 1992, the church's membership has grown from nine to more than 9,000 people including 3,000 homeless or formerly homeless individuals. Pastor Rudy's "Love Revolution" airs Sundays at 12:00 noon Eastern time on SIRIUS XM Radio. He is the author of *Touch: Pressing Against the Wounds of a Broken World* and has contributed monthly to *O, The Oprah Magazine* and to *Epitome* magazine.

My Opinion

Rev. Reinhard Kruse

Affordable Care Act, climate control, trade, nuclear control, etc.—

Obama built all of these up;
Trump tore them down right away;

Now we have to fix them.

Congress only argues about them.
Many people spend time praying.

At Arch Street UMC we do something:

We stand up for justice and equality,
Helping those around us who are in need,
Witnessing to the love of God in the world.

NAIAG Participates in Peace Day

Dale Shillito, Chair, ASUMC Native American Indian Awareness Group

Arch Street's Native American Indian Awareness Group was asked by Jenkintown Middle/High School to participate in teaching the 7th through 12th grade students about Native Americans as part of their first annual Peace Day. Participating with us was Ruth Anne Tickel-Logan of Arrow 510, an activist group from Bucks County.

Linda Singleton opened the teach-in

with introductions. Ozella Smith followed with poetry setting the character of Native Americans. Dale Shillito presented a short summary of American history as seen by Native Americans themselves. Ruth Anne talked about present challenges faced by Native Americans, including her experiences living with the Sioux at the Standing Rock protest village last year. A short video was shown of

Native Thanksgiving, a prayer of thanks for all the things in the natural world that our society generally takes for granted.

This event was held on the last day of school before Thanksgiving. We sincerely hope students reflect upon this gratitude to God, and acknowledge gratitude to Native Americans for their contributions to us.

Reconciling Update

Rev. Dave Krueger, Co-chair, Reconciling United Methodists of Eastern Pennsylvania

The Reconciling United Methodists of Eastern Pennsylvania are watching carefully and waiting on the decisions of the United Methodist Commission on a Way Forward. This commission is composed of 32 persons appointed by the Council of Bishops. The commission has presented three possible plans to address how the greater church will address LGBT inclusion and the question of church unity.

The Council of Bishops will convene in early 2018 to begin moving toward a recommendation for the Special Session of the General Conference in 2019. Depending on the trajectory of that Council, local efforts will need to take into account whether the greater church will move toward a split or create some kind of dual system in which divergent perspectives and practices will be permitted.

Regardless of the decision of the greater church, local Reconciling churches in Eastern Pennsylvania will continue their witness to God's inclusive love. The next planning and strategy meeting will take place in January. We are looking for a laity co-chair to assist with some of the group's administrative and leadership duties. If you are interested, please contact me at davidkrueger01@gmail.com.

Our History: Conference-Level Concern about ASUMC

Dale Shillito, Arch Street Historian

As Rev. Haney began his ministry here, there was much concern at the Conference level for Arch Street UMC, which had once been considered a flagship church. In 1964, an in-depth study of Arch Street was launched by the Conference. Bishop Corson named a group to study the changing patterns of its ministry to the city. The committee sought to analyze the church's existing status, define its constituency, suggest untapped resources and new opportunities for ministry, explore

what other downtown churches were doing, and recommend ways to enlarge the church's strength and effectiveness.

The committee found the church's land at that time to be worth \$2 million, the building worth \$1.4 million. It had an endowment of \$170,000 and a debt of \$70,000. Average Sunday attendance was 334, with 157 on Sunday night. About 35% of members attended every week.

Others attended less frequently. Visitors constituted a large part of atten-

dance. In 1950, our membership had been 1,152. By 1960, membership had dropped to 874. This sudden loss was more apparent than real since a large number of inactive members were transient. Their address was now unknown. They had been removed during the Yrigoyen years to clean up the membership rolls. It should be noted that all urban churches were facing declining membership at this time, as people continued to migrate to the suburbs.

Events

United Methodist Events

Sun Jan 14: Disability Awareness Sunday

Sat Jan 20: Conference Connectional Table meeting, First UMC Phoenixville

Fri-Sun Mar 2-4: Conference Council on Youth Ministry Diversity Retreat, Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center

Sat Mar 10: Tools for Ministry district learning academies

ASUMC Calendar

Please check the “Events” tab on our website (www.archstreetumc.org) for the latest calendar activities.

Sun Jan 14: Human Relations Day—Special offering supports UM work for social justice and at-risk youth

Mon Jan 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

Wed Feb 14: Ash Wednesday—Lent begins

Sun Mar 2: World Day of Prayer

Sun Mar 11: UMCOR Sunday (formerly One Great Hour of Sharing)—special offering supports UMCOR’s worldwide ministries of food, shelter, health and peace (Daylight Savings Time begins)

Thurs Mar 29: Tennebrae service

Fri Mar 30: “Seven Last Words” service

Sun Apr 1: Easter

United Methodist Men meet the first Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM. *United Methodist Women* meet the second Sunday of the month immediately after the 11:00 AM service. The *Native American Indian Awareness Group* meets the third Sunday of the month at 12:30 PM. Refer to the weekly “What’s Happening” bulletin for exceptions to these dates.

Birthdays

January

1 - Nikole Daniel
 2 - Elizabeth Garcia
 4 - Stacy Powers
 5 - Diana Pearce
 8 - Nathan Jefferson
 10 - Dolores Farinre-Carey
 11 - Shirlee Chambers
 14 - Aaliyah Halliday
 18 - Jazzmen Mcllwaine Cuevas, Sam Starnes
 19 - Melanie Beers, Jennifer Olree Collazo
 22 - Mark McNeill
 27 - Albert Crawford
 29 - Bart Everts
 30 - Opal Ripley, Seni Tienabeso

February

2 - Nancy Cheng
 4 - Sabrina McLaughlin
 6 - Thomas Brislin, Carl Dargan
 7 - Kate Buckley, Frederick Farmer, Jr.
 9 - Lily Menaldi
 11 - Kristen Johnson, Elaine Tara Petrossian
 12 - Rachel Ternes, Wilhelmina Young
 13 - Laura Long
 16 - Angela Berry
 18 - Cashor Farmer, Cathy Simpson
 22 - Katie Hoch Mount
 23 - Lori Timmerman
 25 - Russ Alexander, Danielle DiLeo Kim
 27 - Alice Farmer, Sarah McNeill
 28 - Jack McGrath

March

1 - Yvonne Perri
 7 - Mary Allen
 8 - Phil Dellinger, Denise McGiboney
 10 - Emma Falcon Wing Walton
 12 - Elizabeth Donnelly
 14 - Rhonda Moore
 15 - Arthur Pershing
 17 - Nancy Hahn
 18 - Diannajean Giganti
 23 - Betsy Connor, Nancy Megley
 25 - Martin Williams
 26 - Judy Claude, Evelyn Estrada
 27 - Anthony Mastrando, Stephanie Ng
 29 - Grace Regino
 30 - John Gatter
 31 - Thomas Fithian, Steven Whaley

Arch Street Has a Dance Ministry!

Rhonda Moore

“Singing the Body Electric” got off to a great start last fall with three encounters in November. On Wednesday evenings between 7:00 and 8:15 PM, Arch Street parishioners, frequenters, friends, guests, and anyone expressing curiosity or interest convened in the chapel to begin an exploration into the physical embodiment of spirit. In this instance, “spirit” is intended to mean what you are feeling at the moment, what you’re bringing into the space, what you’re thinking of just then, and what you are hoping to discover—about you, about others, about you together with others.

We gathered around the common theme of social dance. Starting with one brave participant, Pat Taylor, we learned the basic steps of the Merengue—festive dance coming from the Dominican Republic. For details, ask Wilhelmina Young, who learned the basic steps and a brief choreographed routine in record time—just under 15 minutes! We touched on the Club Swing, learning one of many versions of this popular North American dance style, and even found time for a lively Polka (here you can access Pastor Robin, since he was in the midst).

In short, we spent quality time together in physical conversation, working both our bodies and our brains. We left the chapel a little more light-hearted and quite a bit more in-the-know about some pretty cool moves.

The really special thing about dancing is, the more people involved, the merrier, so please, come join us in January, right after the start of the Epiphany season! All are welcome, just come as you are, with no worries about level of competency. It’s a great way of counteracting the results of all the celebrations that take place around the table during November and December, or a way of justifying having just one more bite...

When we meet in January, we’ll review what we’ve learned thus far, bringing newcomers up to date, and then move forward with more dances from all over the world. Check the Sunday bulletin for the exact dates and do not hesitate to contact me at 267-779-3451 with any questions.

Looking forward to welcoming a crowd!

The Music Ministry at Arch Street

Adam Haines, Director of Music

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness and come before His presence with singing!

Arch Street, I thank you for the pleasure of being able to usher our congregation into a time of meditative music each week. 2017 has brought many changes to the music ministry, including the welcoming of our beloved 8:30 musician James Dell’Orefice, who inspires us with his whimsical piano skills and leadership at the morning service. A restoration of the organ began and was completed by

Patrick Murphy Organs. A special thanks to Russ Alexander, chair of the Trustees, for helping to facilitate this large undertaking.

The biggest thank you comes to our volunteer choir members, who wake up early, work hard, and give all of their energy to bring you a joyful noise each Sunday. Huge thanks to:

Kim Cooper, Elaine Jenson, Molly McNeil, Ozella Smith, and Soprano Section Leader Gillian Booth

Janis Moore Campbell, Betsy Connor, and Alto Section Leader Samantha DiPompeo

Michael Bowman, Donald Caskey, Warren Cederholm, Jack McGrath, Rhonda Moore, and Tenor Section Leader James Hopkins

Andy Abbott, Remone Mundle, and Bass Section Leaders Bob McMahan and Ethan Wolfe

BRAVO! Please take the time to thank each of these musicians who work with joy and passion every Sunday to make ASUMC a great place to belong!

The Sanctuary Choir, Easter 2017





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POSTMASTER: Return undeliverable pieces to Arch Street United Methodist Church, 55 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Future Dates

- Easter
April 1
- Eastern District
Conference
May 6
- Mother's Day
May 13
- Pentecost Sunday
May 20
- Peace with Justice
Sunday
May 27
- EPA Annual Conference
June 14-16
- Father's Day
June 17

Read past issues of
Voice of the Spire
and follow events at
our website:
www.archstreetumc.org

Arch Street United Methodist Church



Wilhelmina and Becky practicing the dance moves
Rhonda taught them

(Photo courtesy of Becky Parsons)

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