

Voice of the SPIRE

The Newsletter of Arch Street United Methodist Church, *A Reconciling Congregation*

Volunteering at Arch Street—So Many Ways to Serve!

Jennifer Olree-Collazo

This fall, ASUMC has been inviting the congregation to look at new ways to get involved in the work of our church. We are blessed to have some two dozen groups dedicated to enriching our worship experience, helping with our ministries, supporting our annual events, nurturing our congregation, and assisting with the basic functions necessary to keep Arch Street running smoothly.

We showcased the various committees and lay ministries at a Ministry Fair on September 8th. For those who could not be there, representatives from these groups addressed the congregation during the Sunday announcements in September and October, giving an overview of their group's mission and inspiring people to get involved.

Our lay ministries at Arch Street are twofold: reach out to the broader community through ministries such as Grace Café and Serenity House and events such as our indoor Trick

or Treat for families and the monthly Jazz & Joe concerts, and in-reach through our newly created Fellowship, Nurture, and Hospitality Committee and various small groups meant to foster relationships within our church. Our administrative committees work throughout the year to ensure that ASUMC meets its staffing, property management, and fiscal responsibilities.

We are excited by the energy that's being generated! We hope that it inspires us all to consider how best to share the spiritual gifts God has given to each of us.

If you need more information or just a chance to explore what might be a good fit, feel free to speak with Pastor Robin or a member of the Ministry Fair planning team: Betsy Connor (betsyfconnor@gmail.com, 215-232-7186), Nancy Megley (nmegley@msn.com, 215-574-8320), or Wilhelmina Young (thecatalyst212@yahoo.com, 215-227-4034).

Advent 2019: "Hope, Believe, Act, Rejoice!"

Kristi Painter, US2 Mission Fellow

This year's Advent theme explores our call to respond to the continuing fulfillment of God's promises. We will follow the stories of the season from hoping to rejoicing through worship, study, and fellowship. Isaiah will help us envision hope for a renewed world of peace and justice. John the Baptist will help us believe in a better path for ourselves. Mary will inspire us to act with courage and to rejoice in the work that God is doing. Please join us for this exciting season!

Some of this year's Advent events are listed below. Check the Sunday bulletin or the weekly eblast for more details about the events happening this season.

Weekly Advent Study: Join us at ASUMC Wednesdays at 12:30 PM or at Serenity House Thursdays at 1:00 PM to share in a creative midweek time of reflection, prayer, and study on this season's Advent themes.

Jazzy Blue Christmas Service, December 18, 7:00 PM: A service of reflection for those who find the holidays difficult. This year, we will partner with our friends from the Jazz Sanctuary to worship with jazz, prayer, and community support. Cookies, hot cocoa, and coffee will be provided.

Pop-Up Christmas Pageant, December 15, 11:00 AM: A 'pop-up' pageant requires no advance rehearsal so everyone is invited to participate! Kids and adults alike can choose what part they would like to play when they arrive at the service. Costumes will be handed out at the door and participants simply stand up when their character is called.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, December 24, 7:00 PM: We will celebrate the birth of Jesus through music, scripture, and reflection. Invite your friends and family to join us for this beautiful service as we observe God's radical act of solidarity.



Minister's Message

Rev. Robin Hynicka, Pastor

The apostle Peter quotes the prophet Joel in Acts 2:17–19a:

In the days to come it is our God who speaks—I will pour out my Spirit on all humankind. Your children will prophesy, your young people will see visions and your elders will dream dreams. Even on those whom the world considers insignificant, I will pour out my Spirit in those days and they will prophesy. And I will display wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below.

While I think of myself as being young at heart, I know my place in the passage above: I am one of the elders. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) confirmed this by issuing me a “Senior Fare Card.” No matter how others see me, young at heart and/or as an elder, I do have a vision for the congregation, and I do dream dreams about how to get there. That’s one of the reasons I have

decided not to retire yet (after announcing I would go at the end of 2020), but it isn’t the main reason.

The main reason for my decision is that I am full of joy when I am in the presence of the people of ASUMC. My imagination wouldn’t even let me think about some other place to worship and work to build God’s beloved community. I am equally energized and enthralled by the faithfulness of the congregation and the Ministry Team in engaging the hard issues of our current social context. I want to be with the ASUMC family in leading a vibrant congregation as it grows in spirit, strength, and sustainability. There is no doubt that there are mountains to climb, but the view from the top of those mountains is magnificent.

With the Spirit pouring out upon us, I look forward to loving God, doing justice, and making room for all with you!

Notes from The Center–Philadelphia

Deaconess Darlene DiDomineck

Two new US2 Global Mission Fellows have joined the intentional community at Serenity House. Roy Koech and Ben Lasley have jumped right in! Roy will work on our clinic and case management programming for Grace Café and Ben will focus on the People’s Garden and ministry with our Grace Café volunteers. Read more about them later in this issue.

The Grace Café case management team has welcomed two Community College of Philadelphia Behavioral Health students, Rufus Farmer and Kathi Fleming. Combined, they provide more than 25 hours of case management each week connecting our community to crucial resources. Our Wellness Clinic has expanded, enabling our volunteer nurses and a team of healthcare volunteers to provide care each Sunday night. We hosted our first vaccination clinic with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. Our clinic is always in need of volunteers and supplies! To assist with this

lifegiving project, contact Roy Koech (roy@archstreetumc.org).

The People’s Garden had a successful season, expanding to offer a weekly free produce market at Serenity House. Deep thanks to our summer intern Devon Burke and Ben Lasley for their love and care birthing this new project. This season, thanks to a donation from Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha, two new peach trees are taking root in the garden. If you are interested in joining the People’s Garden team, contact Ben Lasley (ben@archstreetumc.org).

Serenity House has a busy fall ahead with healthy cooking classes, bible study, and Serenity Kids Club every Thursday. Contact Kristi Painter to learn more about Serenity House programs and how you can get involved (kristi@archstreetumc.org).

“The 90-Plus Club”: Gladys Ackerman

Rev. Robin Hynicka



In her room at the Protestant Home, longtime member Gladys Ackerman is surrounded with art and artifacts that illustrate her multifaceted life: Raggedy Anne and Andy dolls, watercolor paintings, the Bible, and books of poetry. As an artist, writer, and teacher, Gladys has touched many people with her worldview and wonderful wit. On December 19th, Gladys will celebrate her 99th birthday. This article is one of the ways to celebrate her milestone.

For many years, Gladys lived in the Olney neighborhood where she attended the First Presbyterian Church of Olney. She taught Sunday School in the Primary Department and one of her students, Richard Barnes, friend of ASUMC, continues to be in touch with her. Mr. Barnes had this to say about Gladys: “Gladys has a deep, abiding faith in Jesus and

continues to attend chapel as she is able. She is very engaging and friendly, has many friends at the Protestant Home, and gets out for shopping trips as she is able. We deeply value our many years of friendship.”

Gladys graduated from Olney High School in 1938 and went on to earn a Master’s degree in Education from Temple University. She wrote poetry, sketched Philadelphia scenes, and painted pictures of flowers. Gladys received a “Famous Writers” award for one her works of fiction.

Gladys was devoted to her family and was especially close to her sister Helen. Together, they moved to a senior living facility in Center City and delighted in all that downtown had to offer. While her sister decided to transfer her membership to 10th Presbyterian Church, Gladys preferred the more progressive community of faith at ASUMC. Active and affable always, Gladys attended worship faithfully. She never lost track of her Arch Street connections and kept in touch with Don Robinson and her other ASUMC friends, affectionately known as the Arch Street Angels.

As Helen’s health faded, Gladys made the decision to move with her sister to the Protestant Home. With the support of that continuing care community, Gladys attended to her sister until Helen was called home to be with God.

In my most recent visit with Gladys, we shared Holy Communion and she advised me to stay close to God. Thank you, Gladys, for your warmth, wisdom, and living witness to God’s creative spirit.

Our History: The Long Road to Church Unity and Integration

Dale Shillito, Church Historian

During the era before the Civil War, Bishops Edmund Janes, Edward Ames, and others created the Delaware Conference into which they placed all black Methodist churches in Eastern Pennsylvania. At the time of its formation, this separate but unequal system was considered an improvement since black pastors could now be ordained and the Delaware Conference, led by black clergy, had a degree of autonomy. In 1844, the Methodist Episcopal Church split into North and South conferences over the question of slavery. Methodists did not reunite until 1939. When they did reunite, there was a forced agreement to use the model of the Delaware Conference to segregate black Methodist churches nationwide. The new entity was called the Central Jurisdiction, of which the Delaware Conference became a member.

This paradox of reuniting North and South by separating black and white churches did not set well with more

progressive members of the denomination including many, but not all, here at Arch Street. At General Conference, held every four years, delegates wrestled with whether to abolish the Central Jurisdiction and integrate the church beginning in the early 1950’s. In 1956, integration was ‘permitted’ but not enforced. As part of our integrative process, Arch Street began inviting international students from around the world, regardless of color or nationality.

At the 1964 General Conference, the United Brethren Church united with the Methodist Church. One condition of this union was full integration of the (now) United Methodist Church. This was accepted and the black churches of the Central Jurisdiction were assigned to their proper geographic (formerly all-white) conferences. ASUMC delegates helped to pass this resolution, which also allowed black and white persons to be members of the same individual church.

"God Called, Women Answered!"

United Methodist Women celebrate 150 years of pressing against limits, pushing toward tomorrow

Margaret Harris, President, Arch Street UMW

I think the title is a great way to describe the history of United Methodist Women, so I've stolen it from the UMW website but I don't think the website managers will mind. The UMW is celebrating 150 years in 2019 and we invite you to join in the celebration.

The history of the UMW begins on a rainy night, March 23rd, 1869 in Boston, Massachusetts. On that night, Mrs. William Butler and Mrs. Edwin Parker, wives of missionaries to India, were home on furlough and spoke to a group of eight women at the Tremont Street Methodist Episcopal Church. Mrs. Butler told about the desperate spiritual and physical needs of women in India. A male doctor could not treat women. Schooling for girls was almost nonexistent. Trained and dedicated single women were needed for medical and educational work.

The women who were present called another meeting of women, wrote a constitution, and organized the Methodist Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS). By November 1869, the newly formed organization had raised funds and sent Isabella Thoburn, an educator, and Dr. Clara Swain, a doctor, to India.

Ms. Thoburn began a school with six young girls in Lucknow. This school expanded to include Isabella Thoburn College, the first women's college in Asia. Dr. Swain began her medical work, resulting in the establishment of the first women's hospital in Asia. *Both of these institutions are still serving the people of India.*

Today, the UMW has 800,000 members and is the largest denominational faith group for women in the world. And we are persisting in our efforts to meet the needs of women, youth, and children both in this country and around the world.

UMW President Harriett Jane Olson recently addressed the United Methodist Women of South Carolina, and said, "God called, and women answered!... They saw one possibility or a handful of possibilities, and they did the next right thing. I suspect they felt the pressure of funding, the

pressure of not being sure who would respond to the call." But they did respond, Olson said, "Persistently, pressing for the next possibility and the possibility after that. When they took the first risk, and then the next, and suddenly, they were in a place they never expected to be."

That is how Olson expects the UMW's next 150 years to be: opening hearts to the world right in front of us, persisting in our efforts, moving into needs we can see, and taking us to the next right step.

"We don't know what is possible, except we know that all things are possible through God who strengthens us," Olson said to applause and amens. "We know with whom we walk. We know who calls us. And we know that God loves the world, the broken world, the world we can see. "The possibilities are limitless, and the resources can be built."

She noted that combatting cultural norms has always been a part of UMW's work, including in this 150th year. "Women are still being told they are not qualified to teach theology or to preach," Olson said, noting the reports of sexual harassment and sexual abuse that are being shared as part of the #MeToo movement. But, Olson said, "When we work together in a broken world it's significant."

She urged United Methodist Women to push the boundaries of culture, knowing the culture of this world is not the culture of God's kingdom.

"Open your hearts to the way God is calling us to be constant in prayer for the world that needs to know the Lord so deeply," Olson said in closing. "For the past 149 years we've responded. In this year, this our 150th year, we're also responding. And with God's help we will continue to be faithful to the call."

The Arch Street UMW chapter invites you to join us. We usually meet on the second Sunday of the month in the second floor conference room immediately following the 11:00 AM worship service. For more information, contact Margaret Harris at margaretharris@me.com, 215-568-2206.

United Methodist Resources

Visit the United Methodist Church website (www.umc.org) to find resources on who we are, what we believe, how we serve, and how to stay connected. To join the weekly e-news, sign up at the United Methodist News Service (UMNS) at: www.umnews.org/en/news/umnews-subscriptions.

Welcome, Ben Lasley and Roy Koech—our incoming GMFs!

Janis Moore Campbell, Chair, Staff-Parish Relations Committee

So...what's a Global Mission Fellow (GMF)? Is GMF akin to the Peace Corps? Are Ben and Roy missionaries? The answer is kinda, sorta, not exactly... ish?

All GMF programs stand on the shoulders of dynamic and courageous women in ministry who, in 1950, answered the call to mission service. GMFs are young adults, ages 20–30, who for two years work in social justice ministry in a variety of domestic and international settings. They seek to

address root causes of oppression and work to alleviate poverty and human suffering—typically, the fellows focus on public health, migration/immigration, environmental justice, and education.

GMF Kristi Painter was commissioned in August 2018 to serve ASUMC. Ben Lasley and Roy Koech joined her in mission this August.



Ben Lasley, Global Mission Fellow, commissioned August 2019–21, Arch Street United Methodist Church

Hometown: Summerfield, North Carolina, one hour away from Chapel Hill.

One memory you will never forget? Hiking in Mount Rainier National Park in Washington State and being dwarfed by Mount Rainier—this massive, nonsentient being that radiated God.

Favorite music? I listen to Alternative or Pop music.

Kittens or puppies? Puppies! I grew up with a cantankerous miniature dachshund.

Favorite snack? Pretzels and salsa/hummus.

Favorite movie? The Harry Potter series.

One goal you hope to accomplish during your time at Arch Street? To make Grace Café as sustainable as possible—ecologically and for long-term functionality.

To date, your favorite thing about Arch Street? The radical hospitality at different services. I appreciate the smiles, affirming handshakes, and hugs every Sunday.



Roy Koech (right), Global Mission Fellow, commissioned August 2019–21, Arch Street United Methodist Church

Hometown: Chappell, Nebraska—a town of fewer than 1,000 persons and of which I am very proud.

One memory you will never forget? Spring break, travelling with buddies through Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. We visited six national parks and two national monuments. We camped along the Colorado River on the Utah–Arizona border, next to the Grand Canyon, and on the side of the highway. It was surreal!

Favorite music? Indie and Country.

Kittens or puppies? Both!

Favorite snack? Leftovers.

Favorite movie? Hector and the Search for Happiness.

One goal you hope to accomplish during your time at Arch Street? To be known and trusted in as many communities as possible.

To date, your favorite thing about Arch Street? All the free food!

Update on the Spire Repair Project

Russ Alexander, Chair of the Trustees

In 2017, we began the inspection and repair program of the entire façade of the church as required by the city's façade inspection law. Since our last report (May 2019) we have completed the following items:

- June: Hired CVM Engineers for \$74,500 to do an assessment of the spire. Installed sidewalk protection to protect the public against falling debris.
- August: Attended a hearing before the City of Philadelphia Board of Building Standards about our plan to correct the L&I violation we received in April. Received an 8-week continuance.
- October: Met with our engineer to review findings and prepare for the next Board of Building Standards meeting. At that meeting, the board imposed the following plan on us to be completed by April 2020:
 - Completely close the sidewalk and reinforce the sidewalk protection at our sanctuary exits.
 - Close the parking lanes on Arch and Broad Streets.
 - Wrap the spire in netting to prevent debris from falling into Arch and Broad Streets, estimated investment \$250,000. This item protects the public and

gives us approximately two years to prepare and execute a spire repair plan and a fundraising plan.

- Spire repair plan: This plan will require scaffolding the entire spire and making the repairs. Create and execute a fundraising plan to cover the required investment. Very preliminary estimate of the required investment is more than \$2 million.

The spire repairs are our responsibility as stewards of the public safety and of God's church building. God's building has not received necessary maintenance for several generations. We are now facing the catch-up campaign. Starting with our 2016 roof repairs, we have invested \$422,000 for inspections and repairs. To date, we have funded the work from money on hand and a \$218,000 loan from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Starting with the engineering assessment, we will be funding all work from the endowment, pending receipt of fundraising money.

Please prayerfully consider how you can be a part of the stewardship of God's building, and contact any of the Trustees if you have questions.

News About the Other Spire

Nancy Megley, Editor, Voice of the Spire

If you, like me, grew up in places where church is open from 11 o'clock till noon on Sunday morning, then you, like me, are probably awed and inspired by what a busy place Arch Street is! Editing the *Voice of the Spire* newsletter for the past seven years has been an incredible privilege. By inviting people to write about activities, plans, and comings and goings, I've gotten to know them better and I've had a bird's eye view of a lot of good work that is being done and, with God's help, will continue into the future.

In my first issue as editor, Autumn 2012, Jordan Harris wrote about the Youth Mission Trip to Lumberton, North Carolina. Half of the young people in the accompanying photo, now in their twenties, came back to Arch Street to make the trip again this year.

Pavi Jaisankar reported that the Conference Board of Trustees had unanimously approved Arch Street's proposal to establish an official ministry at Serenity House. Pavi is one of the many young adults Pastor Robin has recruited and coached over the years to help develop their spiritual gifts and explore their calling.

Dale Shillito announced the annual Native American Sunday. Margaret Harris previewed the United Methodist Women's fall activities. I reported that POWER was planning

an intensive 'get out the vote' campaign and had just launched an Education Strategy team.

In his Minister's Message, Pastor Robin wrote about a Grace Café guest who handed him a \$10 bill and said, "This hospitality requires financial support, so here, and thank you for opening the doors." I am thrilled that Robin is using my last issue to tell us he will postpone a well-earned retirement and continue to lead us through the upcoming challenges to the UMC and our own congregation.

And now it's my great pleasure to report that Jennifer Olree-Collazo, who did layout for the *Spire* in the 1990s, will take over as editor with the Winter 2020 issue. This is an opportunity to rethink how our newsletter communicates with the congregation as well as our outside friends and supporters, so please pass along your suggestions to Jen (sculptjen@aol.com) or to Pastor Robin. And if you are interested in getting directly involved, there are many ways to participate, both technical (editorial, production, web editor) and nontechnical (content suggestions, writing assignments, photography). If your time is limited, many functions can be done on an occasional volunteer basis without joining the editorial board. So come and be part of spreading the word about Arch Street!

United Methodist Events and Other Observances

Sun Oct 6: World Communion Sunday
 UMC special offering to provide scholarships for U.S. racial- and ethnic-minority students and international students, on both undergraduate and graduate levels

Sat Nov 9: Mother African Zoar UMC's
 225th Anniversary (call 215-226-5268 or write to motherzoarumc@gmail.com)

Sun Nov 24: Historic St. George UMC's
 250th Anniversary (call 215-925-7788 or write to caitlin@historicstgeorges.org)

Sun Nov 24: United Methodist Student Day
 UMC special offering to provide scholarships and loans for students attending United Methodist-related and other accredited colleges and universities

Thurs Nov 28: Thanksgiving (office closed)

Sun Dec 1: Advent begins

Wed Dec 25: Christmas (office closed)
 ASUMC Annual Christmas Breakfast for the Homeless

ASUMC Calendar

Sign up at our website (www.archstreetumc.org) to receive weekly e-news from Arch Street and check the Sunday bulletin for the latest calendar activities.

A Church Potluck dinner is held at 6:00 PM the first Wednesday of the month followed by Church Council at 7:00. Everyone is invited to attend one or both events, and come even if you don't have a dish to contribute—there is always plenty of food!

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. See the bulletin for exceptions to these dates.

ASUMC Officers and Committees

Please speak with these church leaders if you would like to know more about what they do and the opportunities for volunteering.

Lay Leader: Cathy Simpson

Church Council: Phil Gressman, *Chair*

Staff–Parish Relations Committee: Janis
 Moore Campbell, *Chair*

Trustees: Russ Alexander, *Chair*

Finance Committee: Jim Bibber, *Chair*

Endowment Committee: Ken Bere, *Chair*

Mission and Justice Ministries Committee:
 Open

Worship Committee: Open

Reconciling Ministry Committee: Michael
 Gilbertson, *Chair*

POWER Local Organizing Committee:

Betsy Connor, Nancy Megley, Wilhelmina Young, *Co-chairs*

Recording Secretary: Nancy Megley

Church Historian: Dale Shillito

Editor, *Voice of the Spire*: Nancy Megley

Birthdays

October

1 - Jackson Krueger
 3 - Emi Starr
 5 - Joan Ferron
 10 - Nicola Jefferson
 11 - Sylvia Rose Kim, George Logan
 15 - Kalolaine Tapealava
 18 - Pat Taylor
 19 - Nemahun Tucker
 20 - Terry Whaley
 22 - Tolu Ogunkeye Ajise
 23 - Janis Campbell
 24 - Yema Tucker
 26 - Joe Gutman
 28 - Charles Fry, Siafa Lewis
 31 - Katie Donnelly

November

2 - Gaspar Santos
 3 - Daniel Timmerman
 4 - Joe Kalil
 6 - Gwendolyn Beatty
 10 - Ray Mount
 11 - Cathy Minecci,
 Abel Wediongo Adungy
 12 - Francisco Santos
 16 - Savannah Mae Lindquist,
 Danyale Hammil Small
 17 - Molly McNeill
 19 - Pamela Thomas
 20 - Dorothy Twiggs
 22 - Phil Gressman, Serafim Santos
 24 - Rev. Robert Booker, Mary Crawford
 25 - John Kitterell, Sue Kruse,
 David Mordell
 28 - Patti Manuel
 30 - Debra Wood

December

2 - Regina Bedell
 4 - Aaron Carson
 6 - Kobina Amissah
 16 - Fornati Bedell, Elizabeth Lexa,
 Bob Reeves
 19 - Gladys Ackerman, Heather Warley
 20 - Alice Ming
 22 - Carol Jones, Steve Raytek
 24 - Stephanie Ann Carroll Carson,
 Magumbu Chritelle
 25 - Janice Ciampa
 26 - Nathaniel Collazzo
 28 - Juanita Campbell Ford
 29 - Barbara Prince
 30 - Zoey Bonfante
 31 - Jonathan Liu

Autumn Issue
Oct – Dec 2019

Voice of the Spire, the newsletter of Arch Street United Methodist Church, is published 4 times per year and distributed free to members and friends of the congregation.

To be added to our mailing list, please notify: Office Manager, Arch Street United Methodist Church, 55 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

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Voice of the Spire

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Philadelphia, PA 19107

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Future Dates

New Year's Day – Jan 1

UMC Human Relations Day – Jan 19

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service – Jan 20

President's Day – Feb 17

Ash Wednesday – Feb 26

World Day of Prayer – Mar 6

Daylight Savings Time – Mar 8

UMCOR Sunday – Mar 22

Read past issues of *Voice of the Spire* and follow events at our website:

www.archstreetumc.org

Arch Street United Methodist Church



Pastor Robin emerging from the haunted forest with an unexpected companion at ASUMC's Trick or Treat

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