



LIGHT FROM THE TOWER

Mid-October 2016

The mission of historic First Church is to bring diverse people of metropolitan Buffalo together to follow Jesus Christ through worshiping God, fostering spiritual growth and serving the community.



A Letter from Rev. Elena Delgado

A recent Facebook posting caught my attention so I clicked the arrow to sit for a few moments in the video presence of poet, memoirist, activist Maya Angelou. She began by quoting 1st Corinthians 15, verse 55.

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

"The sting," she said, "is right here," pointing to her heart. How bravely, honestly she named our common experience of grief and loss. Angelou said what we all know. "Yes, the sting is right here," we cry while pointing to our heart.

First Presbyterian Church was stung by the sudden, tragic death of Rev. Dr. Phil Gittings on February 26. I've talked with members about Phil—who he was/is to you and to this congregation (I wish I had known him better!). Many have teared up at mention of his name, others have openly wept as they share their stories of friendship and his pastoral care. Some people have told me they are not ready to be a liturgist again. "It's just too hard right now." Someone told me it feels as though Phil died only weeks ago. "Oh, death, where is your sting?" Well, it is right here.

Professional grief counselors say the first year after a person's death is a critical and important time to confront our loss—the first anniversary, the first birthday, the first Christmas, the first... you fill in the blank. Grieving and mourning is an extended, arduous process. For this congregation, it has only been eight months since Phil died. There has not been intentional pastoral support to mourn together and to celebrate a life well lived. There's never "getting over" the death of someone we love. Let's be honest about that. But when we dare to deeply feel the sting of death, brave enough to embrace it, there will be a day, a moment will come (but when?) when we notice we point less frequently to our own aching heart

and begin pointing with compassion to the hurting heart of others. Over time, the greyness slowly starts to lift— there seems to be a little bit more light, a bit more energy, a bit more joy.

My experience as a pastor and as a chaplain at Hospice Buffalo and Roswell Park yet most importantly, my conversations with you, lead me to say that as a community—as a family—the congregation has not fully mourned Phil’s death. I am confident the congregational system will benefit from an intentional process of mourning so that it can move with greater ease and assurance into the future that awaits it. What would this process be like? Some people have shared their thoughts with me already. One rich suggestion is to hold a classical guitar concert here at the church in Phil’s memory. What are your ideas? What has been helpful to you in the past in your grieving?

Angelou’s quote comes from the Apostle Paul’s long treatise to the church in Corinth on the resurrection of Christ. A brave, courageous man, Paul passionately argues the power of the resurrection in his life. He takes a long time to lay out his lawyerly argument. Hope in the resurrection comes, I believe, over time and with intention. It is a long arduous journey of forward movement towards this hope, with many side and back steps along the way. And always with a need to rest and wait, to listen and reflect.

Paul surely was no stranger to loss and grief. He must have felt the sting of death in his heart, too, as anyone has. That’s why he could write, *“Where, O death, is your sting? Where, O death, is your victory?”* He doesn’t let the question hang forever, he doesn’t keep tapping his own heart. At some moment, he is able to point to the cross and then proclaim, *“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* This is the faith that sustained Phil since childhood, that he preached and taught, that he modeled until his last breath.

This is the same faith that enables us to look grief squarely in the eye and together catch a vision of a brave, courageous life for our journey in this time, in this place.

Elena Delgado

October Trout...wading on the Cattaraugus

By Gene Grabiner



October again.
The creek is cold, clear;
Summer’s silt having fallen away.
I cast a fly upstream, swim it back to me,
And there’s this fast “V” rushing down
after the fly, which gets broken off at my knee.
I have one of these streamers left,
one more chance for a keeper.
So I cast back upstream. And again
that wake, and the fly, broken off.
That’s the way it goes
And some don’t even get once chance
in this life.

Clerk's Corner

The following actions were taken by the Session at its regular meeting on September 21, 2016:

- ✓ Approved the request from Explore Buffalo to serve beer and wine in the chapel during a volunteer Christmas party the evening of Thursday, December 15, 2016.
- ✓ Accepted the staff proposal to congratulate the BPO musicians for signing a six-year contract.
- ✓ Proposed to change the terms of call for Rev. Elena Delgado from temporary pastor to full-time temporary pastor, recognizing the interim steps to be accomplished, with Phil's compensation package as budgeted.

The following motions were approved by the Board of Trustees on September 14, 2016:

- ✓ Elected Lauren Hill President of the Board of Trustees.
- ✓ Denied letter of intent to sell the community garden to a St. John's neighbor.
- ✓ Approved the addition of Sam Gaerte to the board of One Symphony Circle.
- ✓ Approved participation in the PC(USA) Peace & Global Witness Offering on October 2.
- ✓ Approved the request from the CMO Committee that the 25% if the offering that remains with First Church be donated to the Houghton College Buffalo program, which helps refugee students earn college degrees.
- ✓ Approved the recommendation from the Worship and Music Committee that the offering from the Mass Mob October 9 be received by the church; that 10% of the offering be given to One Symphony Circle by the church; and to allow One Symphony Circle to passively fundraise on that day before and after worship at an information booth and with a page in the bulletin.
- ✓ Approved to serve as emergency evacuation sites for Gateway-Longview and D'Youville College.



Yes, I want to help!

HM16-BI

Disaster Relief — DR000193	\$
----------------------------	----

Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Email Address:		

Please detach the reply form and return with your gift to your church; or mail with your check to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), PO Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

“Mind the GAP” is our denomination’s invitation to respond to the needs of our Haitian brothers and sisters impacted by Hurricane Matthew. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is already working alongside established partners to respond to this latest crisis and, as long-term recovery needs are determined, PDA will continue to support those in impacted areas. Give. Act. Pray.



DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A LITERACY VOLUNTEER TUTOR AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ???

If you can read this, you can help us

- We are looking for tutors to tutor for the ESL program right here at First Presbyterian!
- Our tutors work with adult English Language Learners (ELL) who wish to improve their reading, writing and English language skills!
- Join a Program which has served immigrants and refugees for over a decade Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 4:30-6:00 right here at the Church!



**For information and information about training,
call Marco at 716-876-8991
or email at marc.notaro9@gmail.com**

**Central Presbytery
Branch Gathering
November 7, 2016 @ 6:00pm-8:00pm**

Dinner is provided

Maryvale Drive Presbyterian Church
425 Maryvale Drive, Cheektowaga, NY 14225

What if...

*We had unlimited
People
Dollars*

for mission?

What could our possibilities be?

Come dream together!

RSVP Leslie@firstprestona.org by November 2, 2016



Community News

News in the Family

NY Interfaith Power and Light will be joining North Presbyterian Church and Congregation Shir Shalom in Amherst in two separate workshops over two evenings. Free and open to the public.

Workshop 1

“Greening Your Congregation”
(and Your Home)

From no cost/low cost strategies to complete transformations.

Presenter: Glenn Jacob,
Executive Director, NYIP&L

Tuesday, October 18 at 7:30 PM

Shir Shalom (466 Sheridan Dr., Williamsville)

Workshop 2

“Speaking Up”

What can we say during election season and what should I say to my legislators

Presenter: Glenn Jacob,
Executive Director, NYIP&L

Wednesday, October 19 at 7:30 PM

North Presbyterian Church
300 N. Forest, Williamsville



The Allentown Association seeks volunteers to help prepare their new at 61 College St., which will serve as the Association office and provide space for community meetings. Please call the Allentown office at 881-1024 if you can help for an hour or two on any of the dates below. Many hands make light work!

Saturday, October 22, 9am - 1pm

Painting walls, ceilings and floors - please dress accordingly. Extra brushes and fresh rollers welcome. Snacks and beverages provided.

Saturday, October 29, 9am - 1pm

Cleaning and moving office furniture from the old office space at 14 Allen Street.



Dear Church Family,

Thanks for thinking of me on my 95th birthday! I really appreciated your thoughtfulness.

With love, Cleo Alexander



Emily Wettlaufer was the featured artist at Canterbury Woods in September. Her lovely paintings of cats and dogs were on display in the gallery hall. Congratulations, Emily! The recognition is well deserved!



With sadness we share that JoAnn Doerr’s mother, Betty Mahon, died last month in St. Augustine, FL. JoAnn and Jen were in Florida with their family, but have returned home. We extend our condolences to their loved ones.

Our deepest sympathies are extended to Don Houck, and his wife, Debbie, after the passing of Debbie’s mother Ruth Burns. Our prayers are with their family.



This month, a tour of the sanctuary was given to the daughter of *Wild Kingdom* host Marlin Perkins. Suzanne Perkins-Gordon and her husband, Dr. Bertram Gordon were brought by Ted Pietrzak, former Burchfield-Penney director. The three of them could not have been more delightful, nor more impressed with First Church!



Please hold in prayer Norm & Gladys Gibbon as each of them endure health challenges. Gladys continues to struggle with chronic pain and mobility issues. Norm is undergoing treatment for cancer.



Hello Ms. Banas,

On Friday September 30th members of a group known as the Walpole Society, led by Martin Wachadlo, visited your beautiful church for a couple of minutes. It was a wonderful visit and we thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It is a grand church and we are fortunate it has not been “modernized”.

Sincerely, John Herdeg

First Church Calendar Highlights

Sunday Schedule

11:00 AM Worship in the Sanctuary
11:15 AM Sunday School*
12:00 AM Fellowship Time in the Chapel

Communion is served the first Sunday of the month.
*There is no Sunday school on Communion Sundays.

Preaching Schedule

10/16 Rev. Elena Delgado, Pastor
10/23 Rami al Maqdasi, Presbytery pulpit supply
10/30 Bob Sillars, Prebytery Moderator

Weekly Events

Mondays

6:30 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry
at Eggertsville-Snyder Library

Tuesdays

10:00 AM Staff Meeting
12:30 PM Food Bag Distribution
4:30 PM Literacy Tutoring

Wednesdays

4:30 PM Literacy Tutoring

Building Use

Wednesdays 2:30 PM Houghton Worship
In Chapel
Thursdays 3-7 PM Native Offerings
Crop Share Pickup
Thurs., 10/20 7 PM Explore Buffalo
Speaker Series

Committee Meetings

Wed. 10/5 5:00 PM Worship & Music
Wed. 10/5 6:00 PM Christian Education
Wed. 10/5 6:00 PM Personnel & Admin.
Wed. 10/12 5:15 PM Investments
Wed. 10/12 5:45 PM Board of Trustees
Sat. 10/15 10:30 AM CMO
Sun. 10/16 12:15 PM Deacons
Tues. 10/18 6:00 PM One Symphony Circle
Wed. 10/19 7:00 PM Session
Sun. 10/23 12:15 PM PNC

Church Programs/Events

Thurs. 10/20 1:00 PM Medina Sandstone
Induction Ceremony
in Medina, NY
Thurs. 10/27 6:00 PM Women's Book Club
at JoAnn Doerr's
Mon. 10/24 November Newsletter Deadline
Sun. 10/30 Officer installation during worship

Please note, the parking lot will be reserved by One Symphony Circle each Saturday night and some Sunday afternoons in October during Kleinhans events to fundraise for the tower campaign. Please call the Church Office with any questions.

Save the Date!

Ars Nova on **Sunday, November 20** at 6:30 PM

The next Friends of Night People volunteer opportunity will be on **Wednesday, November 30** at 4:30 PM.

Joint worship AT Westminster on
Sunday, December 4 at 10:30 AM

The Book Group will gather on Thursday, October 27 at 7:00 PM at JoAnn Doerr's home. The book to discuss is Consider the Fork by Bee Wilson. Light refreshments will be provided.



The Prayer Shawl ministry group meets Mondays at 6:30 PM at the Eggertsville-Snyder Library (4622 Main St. in Snyder just past Harlem Rd.) Anyone is welcome, and yarn can be provided.



The Lyon Food Pantry at First Church continues to feed people in our neighborhood each week. Please continue to give to the Lyon Fund, and also bring canned goods the first Sunday of each month. Another way you can help is by placing your unused **coupons from the Sunday paper** in the church office. Some of the volunteer shoppers are real bargain hunters, and will put them to good use! Thank you!

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

One Symphony Circle, Buffalo, NY 14201-1213
(Across from Kleinhans)

Phone: (716) 884-7250 Fax: (716) 884-7253
www.firstchurchbuffalo.org
email@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Twitter: @1stChurchBflo

"Like" us on Facebook:

"First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo, NY"

Additional parking is available in the Gateway-Longview lot on Wadsworth Street Sunday mornings from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM, courtesy of Carl Paladino.

FIRST CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Elena Delgado, *Pastor*

RevElena@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 13

The Reverend John Long, D.D.

Parish Associate for Community Outreach

JohnRLong17@verizon.net

The Reverend Jack Smiley, *Pastor Emeritus*

Dr. David Bond, *Organist/Choirmaster, Bookkeeper*

DBond@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 17

Christina Banas, *Business Manager*

CBanas@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 11

Tom Hollfelder, *Custodian/Security Guard*

Church Office, extension 10



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICERS

SESSION AND TRUSTEES BY CLASS AND TERM

Clerk of Session

Janet Hill

Class of 2017

Mark Armesto (T) (2)

Lucas Lloyd (T) (1)

Henry Porter (T) (1)

Sue Snyder (1)

Roger Woodard (1)

Class of 2018

John Darby (T) (1)

Tim Hess (2)

Lauren Hill (T) (1)

Susan Koepfel (2)

Class of 2019

Don Houck (T) (1)

Andrew Gaerte (2)

Stephanie Smith (2)

Maria Oakley (2)

Lovelace Quarshie (1)

BOARD OF DEACONS BY CLASS AND TERM

Class of 2017

Pat Brown (2)

Rebecca Whipple (1)

Madeline Mason (1)

Lou Ann Luther Riegle (1)

Olga Rico-Armesto (2)

Nolan Whipple* (1)

Class of 2018

Christina Banas* (1)

Mary Field (1)

Liz Kamke (2)

Sheila Miller (1)

Tina Osei (2)

Class of 2019

Jackie Addo (2)

Gifty Koramoah (2)

Sam Gaerte (1)

June McGrath (1)

Denis Wettlaufer (1)

(T) indicates that the Elder has also been elected to serve as a Trustee.

*Indicates co-moderator

ON JUSTIFICATION

#40WORDPRAYER

@BREYESCHOW

The injustices of the the world can be overwhelming,
so we turn away,
we walk away,
we give in.
God, in the face of injustice, give us
humility to see our involvement,
courage to step in the way,
and faith to trust your power
over others.
Amen.