

Highlights

MAR 3 2024

Set Free through Meditation

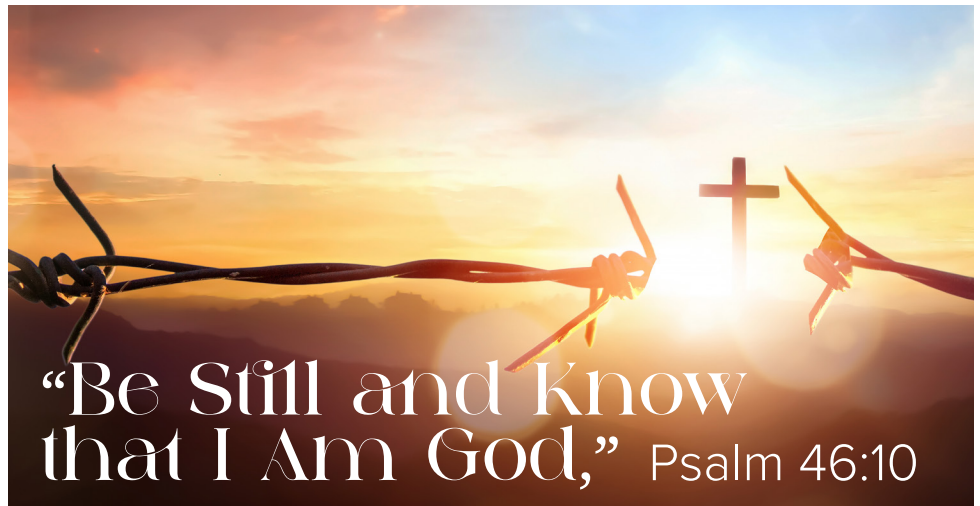
PASTOR ROGER OWENS

Dear Friends,

In the spring of 2013, I participated in an eight-week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction course at Duke Integrative Medicine. I had read a great deal about mindfulness meditation and practiced some on my own, and I was familiar with how many Christian contemplative practices bear striking similarities to the practice of mindfulness meditation—but I'd never had an instructor or a group, so I signed up.

Those eight weeks were like boot camp in paying attention and being present. I learned how to better handle chronic pain, stop fighting anxiety (which only makes it worse), and enter deeply the present moment. When the eight weeks were over, I noticed that the stress headache I'd experienced almost every day for months was gone.

The early 20th Century philosopher Simone Weil once wrote, "Attention is the substance of prayer." So much of living a life with God is learning to slow



“Be Still and Know that I Am God,” Psalm 46:10

down, be present, and savor each moment. It feels weird writing that, because those injunctions have almost become clichés—but it's true. I couldn't believe that a secular mindfulness course at a research university did more for my spiritual life than almost anything else.

I left thinking, "Why aren't we teaching people this at church?"

Jesus is aware that people struggle with racing thoughts, worry about the future, and perseveration about the past. In the Sermon on the Mount, he instructed his followers not to worry about their lives (Matt. 6:25)—to which the appropriate reaction might seem, *Are you kidding me?!* And then he pointed to the wildflowers as an object lesson: "Consider the lilies," he said. But I think he was using them not as an object lesson alone—I think he was offering a

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MISSION SPOTLIGHT

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MISSION TRIP: GUATEMALA

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Set Free Through Meditation

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practice to help us address anxiety: Turn your mind from its fixation on worry by paying attention to what is right in front of you. In other words, Jesus was encouraging mindfulness—purposeful attention to the present moment—because it’s only in the present that we can encounter God.

All of this makes me excited that Dr. Will Adams, a professor of psychology at Duquesne University, will begin leading a meditation course here at the church beginning Tuesday, March 5, in the Chapel at 5:45 pm. Will has studied meditation in a variety of traditions, including Christian contemplative traditions, and he will be offering instruction in meditation from a non-sectarian perspective, but which can support and deepen a Christian spiritual life. I attended a five-week course he led last fall, and I haven’t met a meditation teacher as well-informed, gentle, and inviting as Will.

This course requires no experience. Will offers simple instructions and insights, leads an experience of meditation, and then provides time for the group to reflect together on the gifts and challenges of the experience. In the fall he began with a verse from a psalm that says, “Be still and know that I am God,” (46:10) and suggested that verse summarized the meditative experience: the gift of inner stillness that allows us to be open to the Divine Love that pervades our lives.

If you’ve ever been curious about meditation—perhaps you’ve read many of the reports of its health benefits, which seem always to be making the news—or you know you are beset by racing thoughts you can’t calm and you long for a pathway to greater peace, or if you desire to experience a spiritual practice that can support your relationship with God, I hope you’ll join me this Tuesday. No need to register, and no preparation necessary—just come. I suspect you’ll be glad you did.

Peace, 

New Meditation Course

TUESDAYS 5:45-7PM / MAR 5-APR 2 / CHAPEL

Designed for beginners as well as experienced meditators, this nonsectarian meditation course will draw deeply from the wisdom of Christian contemplative traditions as well as Buddhist traditions. The class will offer guidance on how to create and sustain a consistent meditation practice, and to bring contemplative sensibilities into our daily relationships, work, parenting, and creative endeavors. **Just show up, no registration needed.**

The leader, Will Adams, PhD, serves as a psychology professor at Duquesne University, clinical psychologist, meditation teacher, ecopsychologist, and author. He has practiced contemplatively-oriented psychotherapy for over thirty years. Dr. Adams grew up Presbyterian and has been engaged in devoted meditation practice for thirty-eight years, having studied with many esteemed Christian and Buddhist teachers. Will leads

ecopsychology/ecospirituality workshops in the woods, and recently published a book on our relations with the rest of nature: *A Wild and Sacred Call: Nature-Psyche-Spirit*.

Donations A donation of \$10-\$15 per session is suggested but not required to attend.

Questions? Contact Will W. Adams by email at adamsw@duq.edu.



Sunday at FCPC

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Rev. Roger Owens shares Freedom from the Idol of *Pleasure* and Mark 9:42-48.

8:15am Cup and Loaf Worship Service Chapel

9:30am Contemporary Worship in Fellowship Hall

Kids' Church (Lower Level)

Nursery Care (Room 109)

Comfort Space (Room 107)

10:15am Children's Choir (Choir Room)

11am Traditional Worship Service Sanctuary

Kids' Church (Lower Level)

Nursery Care (Room 109)

Comfort Space (Room 107)

2pm Middle School Youth Group (Youth Lounge)

4pm High School Youth Group (Youth Lounge)

7pm Lenten Small Group (Lounge)

Are You New to FCPC?

If you are a guest, we are grateful you have joined us in worship and we hope you are well taken care of and feel at home. Please stop by the Welcome Center in the lobby or say hello to a staff member or usher.



Lenten Sermon Series

Mar 3 Mark 9:42-48, Freedom from the Idol of *Pleasure*

Mar 10 Mark 10:17-27, Freedom from the Idol of *Possessions*

Mar 17 Mark 10:35-45, Freedom from the Idol of *Power*

Summer Mission Project

PATHS OF LIGHT MINISTRY IN GUATEMALA

Paths of Light Ministry in Guatemala is one of FCPC's international mission partners. Plans to visit and assist them with whatever needs to be done the week of June 17-23, 2024 are in the making. For more details or to sign up,

scan the QR code. Copies of the registration form are also available in the church office. If you have further questions, please contact Pastor Rebecca (rebecca@fcpc.us). **Registration and a deposit of \$300 are due on March 6.**



Mission Partners Making a Difference

REVERENDS ELMARIE & SCOTT PARKER / MISSION CO-WORKERS IN LEBANON

Our Mission Partners of the Month for March are the Reverends Elmarie and Scott Parker. Elmarie and her husband Scott are Presbyterian mission co-workers who are based in Beirut, Lebanon. They began their work in July 2013, and moved to Beirut at the beginning of Advent in December 2013.

Elmarie serves as a regional liaison to Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. She works to strengthen the relational ties between the churches in her region and churches in the United States. Scott serves with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) as a writer in residence. Scott has been asked by the MECC to lead their efforts in responding to children traumatized by unrest and war in Iraq and Syria who now seek refuge in Lebanon. Out of this invitation came "Strong Kids,

Strong Emotions," a play-based program that seeks to develop emotional and spiritual resiliency in Iraqi and Syrian children refugeeed in the Beirut area.

FCPC supports the Parkers' ministry financially through our mission budget. This month we'll be gathering on March 10 from 12:30pm-2pm to learn about the Parkers' ministry and make cards for them. While it's always been challenging to serve as missionaries abroad, in the last year, the Parkers have also been dealing with health challenges and rampant inflation in Lebanon. We hope you can join us to encourage the Parkers in their work to further God's kingdom abroad.



Holy Week Worship

PALM SUNDAY / MAR 24

8:15, 9:30, and 11am

MAUNDY THURSDAY / MAR 28

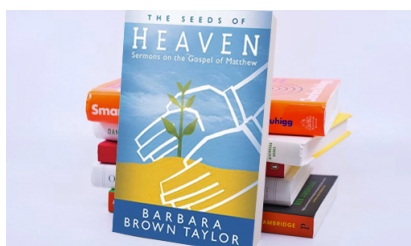
7pm with Holy Communion and designed with all ages in mind. This service will not be live-streamed. (Childcare provided)

GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE / MAR 29

7pm with Mendelssohn's Christus / A service of extinguishing candles, darkness, and dramatic music and drums, reflecting the drama of Christ's crucifixion. (Childcare provided)

RESURRECTION OF THE LORD / MAR 31

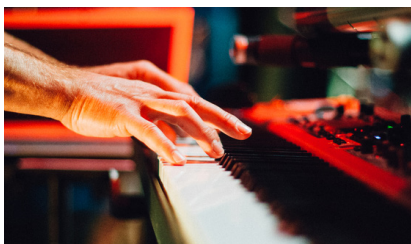
8:15 and 11am with the West Virginia Brass Quintet and Timpani, in Sanctuary
9:30am Contemporary Service



Friday Morning Book Group

LENT THRU JUNE / FRIDAYS 9:30-10:30AM VIA ZOOM

Join us Friday mornings as we focus on *The Seeds of Heaven: Sermons on the Gospel of Matthew* by Episcopal priest and author Barbara Brown Taylor. All are welcome! Call Kitty Skinner, 412 406-7304, for more information or for the Zoom link details.



Worship Musicians Needed

VOCALISTS & INSTRUMENTALISTS FOR 9:30AM WORSHIP

We are in need of musicians and vocalists desiring to use their God-given gifts and talents for the 9:30am contemporary worship band. Must be available for rehearsals and Sunday mornings. Contact Jason Adams, jason@fcpc.us, to get involved.



Event Hosts Needed

PAYS \$100 PER EVENT

We need Event Hosts to provide help and hospitality during community events at FCPC. You are required to be an FCPC member (18+ years old) and have (or be able to obtain) clearances. If you are interested or need more information, please contact Rebecca DePoe at rebecca@fcpc.us.



Letter Writing Event

SUN MAR 10 12:30-2PM AT FCPC

Join us to write letters to support political prisoners and our international mission partners. The event is sponsored by the Peace and Justice Subcommittee of the Mission Committee. Contact Bryan Bass-Riley for more information (bryan.bassriley@gmail.com).

Care & Concern

We hold these friends in prayer:

David Fowler Penny Young
Laurel Schultz Jenna Rodrigues
Tom and Pam Stickle Tom Taylor
Matt Logue, friend of Bob Heister
Kim & Rob Strohm
Kimberly, sister-in-law of the Gazarov family
Jane May, sister of Sue Patrick
Bob, friend of Brian Baxter
Sandy Preuhs, friend of Bob Heister
Yemane, friend of Pete Waterkotte
Libby Hirsch, friend of Emy Boag
Margaret S., friend of Emy Boag
Jason, son of Sheryl Austin
Jane May, sister of Sue Patrick
Hayley Hellstern's grandfather, John Philips

We pray for those who grieve:

We pray for comfort for Dorothy Hill and family with the loss of Dorothy's husband Bill Hill on February 25.

We pray for Matt Scott and family on the passing of his father.

We pray for Judy Due with the loss of her husband, George Due, on February 11.

We pray for the family and friends of Scott Miller, who passed away on February 7.

We pray for comfort for Sheryl Austin and family on the loss of her mother, Elizabeth Hernandez, on February 8.

We pray for the family and friends of Amy Teele who passed away on January 31. Her funeral will be held at FCPC on Friday, April 12, at 6pm.

Prayer for our congregation—May we be united in Christ and grow in His love. May we all know that we are God's beloved children.

We pray for peace, aid, and consolation for all who suffer, including:

- + The people of Israel, Palestine, Ukraine, and every place there is conflict and violence.
- + Refugees throughout the world.

To keep this list current, please renew requests on a monthly basis for continued prayers.

Subscribe to Weekly Highlights

Get the weekly *Highlights* newsletter delivered to your email inbox. Sign up: tinyurl.com/FCPCEmail.

Birthdays

MAR 3 Bill Dawson, Jane Flannery, Larry Niemann, Jane Flannery, Wilson Todd

MAR 4 Ava Persichetti, Gus Schroeder Jr, Callan Stallard, Bill Succop

MAR 5 Dennis Dudley, Rachel Ferris

MAR 6 Andrew Boag, Andrew Minor, Donna Olbrich

MAR 7 Alexis Boyd, Marcelo Rocha

MAR 8 Bryan Bass-Riley, Grace Johnjulio, Anna Schroeder

MAR 9 Ann Boyd, Eva Havlicsek

MAR 10 Sandie Enders, Brian Jewart, Paul Lucas

Letters of Concern

Every week the deacons send letters of concern to members of our church family who are experiencing joys or concerns. You are invited to sign these letters each week. Cards are located at these locations:

+ **8:15am Chapel**

+ **9:30am Fellowship Hall**

+ **11am Atrium**



Need a Caring Presence?

Stephen Ministers at FCPC provide one-on-one, Christ-centered care to people in the congregation and the community experiencing life difficulties. If you or someone you know needs support, contact Nikki Rosswog at 412-963-8243 ext. 07, or nikki@fcpc.us.

Keep Us Informed

Have you recently moved, changed your phone number or email? Please contact Sarah in the church office with your updates (sarah@fcpc.us).

Children & Family Ministries (Infant-5th Grade)

SUNDAY MORNING

8:15AM WORSHIP

No children's programming during this service.

9:30AM KIDS' CHURCH

For age 3 to 5th grade. Children are signed in prior to worship and begin the service on the children's rugs at the back of Fellowship Hall. After the Children's Message, children are led to the lower level Kids' Space. Parents/guardians can pick up their children in the lower level.

9:30 & 11AM NURSERY CARE

Room 109, for ages 0-3. Staffed by two experienced adults.

9:30 & 11AM COMFORT SPACE

Room 107. A place to comfort or feed a child and watch the worship service.

11AM KIDS' CHURCH

For age 3 to 5th grade. Children are signed in prior to worship and begin the service with loved ones. After the Children's Message, children are led to the lower level Kids' Space. Parents/guardians can pick up their children in the lower level.

Questions? Contact our Director of Children & Family Ministries, Pastor Lori Bass-Riley, by email at lori@fcpc.us or call/text 412-737-1412.



Wednesday Night Live

FOR KIDS & FAMILIES / WEDNESDAYS THRU MARCH 13

Join us on Wednesdays to deepen your family's relationship with God. Elementary age children can attend without adults. Children younger than kindergarten must be accompanied by an adult. Sign-up via the QR code.

6pm Dinners and snacks

6:30-7:30pm Program

7:30-8pm Games and free play



VBS 2024

JULY 8-12 1-4PM / PREK (AGE 4) - GRADE 5

Registration is now open for VBS! Our planning is taking shape and we are excited to share more with you soon. To register, scan the QR code. Our VBS theme will be announced soon along with more information on ways you can be a VBS volunteer.



Now Hiring Sunday Nursery Caregivers

Know someone with experience and love for young children? We have several available positions for Sunday nursery caregivers, 9am-

12:30pm. You must be 18+ years and have experience with children and infants. The schedule is flexible. To apply, contact Pastor Lori Bass-Riley at 412-737-1412 or by email, lori@fcpc.us, or scan the QR code.



Youth Ministry (Grade 6-12)

We invite all middle and high school students to join our weekly Sunday afternoon youth group in the Youth Lounge for games, snacks, talk about how scripture impacts our life, and grow our community.

TODAY, SUN MAR 3


Middle School 2-3:30pm

High School 4-5:30pm

THIS WEEK we will be challenging each other with puzzling and wild games. Will you and your team win? We are also going to be talking about how God's heart is loving.

Questions?

Reach out to Ryan Lancia, Director of Youth Ministries at ryan@fcpc.us or 412.963.8243 x19.



MARCH 2024

3RD - MS 2-3:30 & HS 4-5:30

10TH - MS 2-3:30 & HS 4-5:30

17TH - MS 2-3:30 & HS 4-5:30

24TH - ZONE 28 MS 1-2:30 & HS 3:30 - 5

31ST - EASTER NO YG



Summer Trips for Youth

SURF CITY CAMP IN MICHIGAN

This year's summer trips for middle school and high school are both Surf City! Surf City is a camp in Michigan that is full of activities like tubing, zip-lining, laser tag, crazy games, and time to grow in community and with God.

Middle School (available for those in 6th-9th grade for '24-'25) happens August 4-9 and costs \$650.

High School (available for those in 9th grade through high school graduate) happens July 21-26 and costs \$650. Register at fcpc.us/youth-ministry.



Sunday Kids' Church Adult Team Sign-Up

SIGN-UP THRU THE QR CODE

Be a part of our Sunday team and help share the love of Christ! All adult volunteers will need clearances and to go through our child protection process.



College Scholarships

DEADLINE TO APPLY IS APR 7

FCPC offers a one time college scholarship for high school seniors. All are welcome to apply! Award amounts are based on the number of awardees. Deadline to apply is April 7. The application is at fcpc.us/youth-ministry.

Online Giving

+ Scan this QR code to give online

+ Text the word "Give" to 412-201-0557



How to Financially Support FCPC

Financial Pledge You can make a financial pledge to FCPC no matter the time of the year. 2024 pledges can be made online via our website (www.fcpc.us/giving) or by contacting FCPC's Finance Administrator, Sandi Deaner (sandi@fcpc.us) or call 412-963-8479.

Stock Donations FCPC accepts stock donations. When donating stock, please send a notification letter to Sandi Deaner. Include the name of stock, number of shares, how to apply the donation on your account, and the date you will donate your gift. For further instructions, contact Sandi Deaner.

Corporate Gift Matching If your workplace supports nonprofits through a corporate gift matching program, double the impact of your gift to the church!

Per Capita Donation Another way to give is by helping to offset FCPC's Per Capita assessment, paid to the presbytery based on church membership. For 2024, FCPC will pay approximately \$33,006 (\$36.35 per member). Your donation of \$36.35 designated for the Per Capita assessment can help offset this obligation.

Legacy Gifts Consider making a legacy gift to the church that tells the story of your hope in Christ. You can leave a gift to the church through wills, retirement beneficiary, insurance beneficiary, property sale, and other options are available.

Please consult with an attorney or professional advisor before making estate changes.

This Week at FCPC

MON MAR 4

9am-2:15pm Preschool

10:30-11:45am Lenten Small Group (Lounge)

2-3pm Knitting Group (Library)

6-7:30pm Community Parent Group (Atrium)

7-8pm Worship & Music Committee Mtg (Chapel)

7-8:30pm Mission Committee Meeting (Lounge)

TUES MAR 5

8-9:15am Men's Prayer Fellowship (Lounge)

9am-2:15pm Preschool

9:30-10:30am Staff Mtg. (Lounge)

3:30-4:30pm Stephen Ministry Mtg (Bride's Room)

5:45-7pm Meditation Class (Chapel)

7-8pm Christian Nurture Committee Mtg. (Library)

7-8:15pm Lenten Small Group (Zoom)

WED MAR 6

9am-2:15pm Preschool

9:30-11am Community Bible Study (Rm 310)

6:30-8pm Wednesday Night Live (Fellowship Hall, LL)

6:30-8:30pm A&P Mtg (Library)

7-8:30pm Harvest Fair Discussion Group (Lounge)

THURS MAR 7

9am-2:15pm Preschool

10-11am Lenten Small Group (Longwood)

6:30-7:30pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

7:30-9:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

FRI MAR 8

9am-12pm Preschool

SAT MAR 9

10:00-11:30am Tunes for Tots (Lounge)

11am-12pm Confirmation Experience (Chapel, Atrium)

Daylight Savings Set your time devices ahead

SUN MAR 10

8:15am Cup and Loaf Worship (Sanctuary)

9:30am Contemporary Worship (Fellowship Hall)

10:15-10:55am Children's Choir (Choir Room)

11am Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)

12:30-2pm Peace & Justice Letter Writing (Lounge)

2-3pm Middle School Youth Group (Youth Lounge)

4-5:30pm High School Youth Group (Youth Lounge)

7-8:15pm Lenten Small Group (Lounge)

Chancel Flowers

The chancel flowers today are given for the glory of God and by Dave and Helen Houggy in memory of Robert W. Johnson, FCPC Director of Music (1970-1982), Organist, Choir Director, Teacher, and Friend.

Your order of flowers beautifies the sanctuary and is a way to honor or remember someone special. You can find order forms in the church office, scan the QR code, or visit fcpc.us/forms.

