

Issue 1:  
Fall, 2016

# FPC Faith in Action

*News of First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills, NY*

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*“Shout for  
joy to  
the LORD,  
all  
the earth.  
Worship  
the LORD  
with  
gladness.”  
-Psalm  
100:1-2a*

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Welcome to the FPC FIA, the brand-new newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills. It has taken some time to assemble the staff and the stories, and to plot out a schedule. So while this spring issue became a fall one, going forward, we plan to roll out an issue every other month. If you have a news item or writing to contribute, send an e-mail to Lois Anne DeLong at [betwink13@optonline.net](mailto:betwink13@optonline.net), or to church administrator David Barnett at [presbyfh@nyc.twcbc.com](mailto:presbyfh@nyc.twcbc.com)

Note that additional information on many of these events can be found at Pastor Jack Lohr's church blog post at <http://presbyfh.blogspot.com/> or the church web site at <http://www.presbyfh.org/>. Specific links are provided where appropriate.

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## The Sweet Sounds of Summer on 112th Street

Though summer is often a quiet time in the life of the church, that was not the case this year. In June and July, several special events ensured this time was anything but quiet. (see centerfold for images)

The joyful noises started at Forest View Nursing Home on June 13. A group of 15 from the congregation shared with our neighbors there a gift of song, and acknowledged residents with June birthdays. (See the “Share the Care” article later in this issue.)

Two weeks later, on June 26, we took the sound with us to the Jurassic Playground in Flushing Meadow for “Worship in the Park.” The informal service, led under a canopy while the congregants perched on blankets and lawn chairs, was an experiment in bringing the church out of the walls of the sanctuary and into the community. **David Yurick, Bruno Razafindrakoto** and **John Biswas** provided the music, both for the

worship service and the fellowship time that followed. As always, there was plenty of good food to enjoy.



## VBS July 11-15

Fast forwarding to July, the joyful noise was the sound of children's laughter and upbeat, danceable songs as the church welcomed 18 children to our annual Vacation Bible School. The theme this year was “Surf Shack: Catch the Wave of God's Amazing Love.” The phrases “dude,” “amazing,” “hang loose,” and even “Cowabunga” entered everybody's vocabulary, as the children played games, made crafts, and

learned how God “creates, helps, calms, loves, and sends.” Led by **Michelle Loeb** and **Pat Young**, each day’s program revolved around a Bible story that taught one of the five concepts listed above.

Many thanks to those who gave money, materials, and especially to the 16 volunteers who donated their time during the week, including seven of our amazing youth:

**Daniel Monteagudo, Jarrod Sinibaldi, Osato Irowa, Rebecca Manasse,**

**Brianne Raymond, Jeremy Aguilar, and Kingsley Ewumi.** Special kudos to **David Barnett**, who truly went above and beyond in his first VBS handling numerous administrative tasks to support the program. Others deserving acknowledgement include: **Nadina Grants, Carla Mullins, Jessica Odle-Baril, Charlie Potter, Helen Potter, Luis Gallego, Lois Anne DeLong, Karen Wood, and Pastor Jack Lohr.**



To view a PDF version of the VBS yearbook, go to <http://tinyurl.com/qto6omz>. To see scenes from opening and closing days of the program, check out the videos posted at <http://tinyurl.com/hqlugja> and <http://tinyurl.com/gtcbj2z>

### *Summer Serenade, July 16*

The last of those summer sounds may have been the sweetest of all. On July 16, the church hosted “Summer Serenade,” bringing to our space a talented corps of singers and instrumentalists. A number of musical styles were shared—gospel, and world music among them—but, the free-form, improvisational genre of jazz set the tone.

Organized primarily by **Bruno Razafindrakoto**, the night began as **Pastor Jack** led a sing-along on Pete Seeger’s song, “Guantanamera.” A few of the artists shared original compositions, such as tenor sax player and singer **Alan Lenarcic** performing his “Summer in August,” and guitarist **Shu Odamuru** performing “Rain” and “Say Hello to Oscar.” Tenor sax player **Tom Caldin**, offered “Out of Nowhere,” and “Stolen Moments,” and **Mino Razafimpamonjy**, performing on the valiha, an instrument from Madagascar. Mino also shared original pieces, “Gasygasy and Hazoala (Forest Trees).” **Kazu Odagiri**, and Bruno backed up everyone on drums and bass, respectively.

In addition to the jazz artists, the evening featured a Chopin piano piece played by **Joy**, a young member of the Thai Community. And, **Mindy** and **Herndon Lackey, David Barnett**, and **John Biswas** shared a *cappella* renditions of two hymns: “This is My Song,” sung to the tune of *Finlandia*, and “His Eye Is On the Sparrow.”

You can catch one of the numbers from the concert at <http://tinyurl.com/z5vhwlf>. A full digital version will be available soon.

### *New Organ Keeps the Sweet Sounds Going*

*\$41,000 in donations/pledges in less than 3 months!*

This spring, FPCFH issued a challenge to its members. The pipe organ was breathing its last gasps, and only the skill of organist and choirmaster **David Yurick** kept it wheezing along. Stepping out in faith, and acting on the recommendation of a task force composed of Yurick, **Bruno Razafindrakoto, Karl Stayna** and **Pastor Jack**, that a new organ was needed, the church was asked to raise \$25,000 to complete the funds needed for a purchase. The congregation responded--- and then some! In only a few

weeks, the sum was raised between donations and pledges. On August 21, it was used for the first time in worship. Many thanks to our members and friends who ensured the blessings of beautiful music for many years to come. The extra funds will be used to maintain the organ and to support our music ministry. We're planning a dedication/ celebration concert for Saturday, November 5. Watch for details!

## Beyond the Walls: Our Role in The Larger World



### First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills

*"Where the world gathers to worship and serve!"*

The mission of our church calls us to reach out to "those in need within our church, across our communities, and throughout the world." But, in such a large

world, and in the big city we call home, where and how can we address such needs? The church has spent a good deal of time this summer examining where our congregation—as a whole, or through the efforts of individual members—could respond to the call of that mission statement. On June 12, Pastor Jack preached a sermon called "Choose Justice." The sermon was inspired by "A Social Creed for the 21st Century," which was adopted by the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 2008, but remains little known by most within the denomination. At this service, all attendees were given a check-off list of 40 social issues and were asked to select the ones they felt "God was calling on us to care about." You can see the results of this congregational poll at <http://tinyurl.com/gteesu8>.

Based on these results, the session selected two issues "Racial Justice" and "Gun Violence" (see "Pastor's Corner" article below). In addition to these issues, Pastor Jack regularly posts community-based initiatives and calls to action from the Presbytery and the larger church. In recent weeks, these postings have ranged from supporting the local police precinct's National Night Out Program to a march supporting the rights of migrant farm workers. If you are on the church's e-mail list, you should be receiving these announcements on a regular basis. Read them, prayerfully think about them and find for yourself, in the words of theologian Frederick Buechner, "The place ... where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

### Youth Notes

This summer marked an important transition period for many of the church youth. Three of them—**Daniel Monteagudo**, **Jarrold Sinibaldi**, and **Andres Gallego**—graduated from high school in June and headed on to college. Daniel has started at Yale University in New Haven, CT; Jared is attending Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH; while Andres is starting out closer to home at Nassau Community College in Garden City, NY. **Henry Ventura** also starts anew at Jamaica High School.

**Josh Brewer** was also among our graduates, earning his bachelor's degree from Quinnipiac University. Josh is staying at that school this fall to work on a master's degree.

Lastly, youth leader **Lydia Tembo** has also set out on a new academic adventure. She has recently started classes at Princeton Theological Seminary, where she intends to attain a dual degree in Divinity and Social Work. Let's remember to lift up all these students as they start the school year, as well as all the other students and teachers within our congregation.

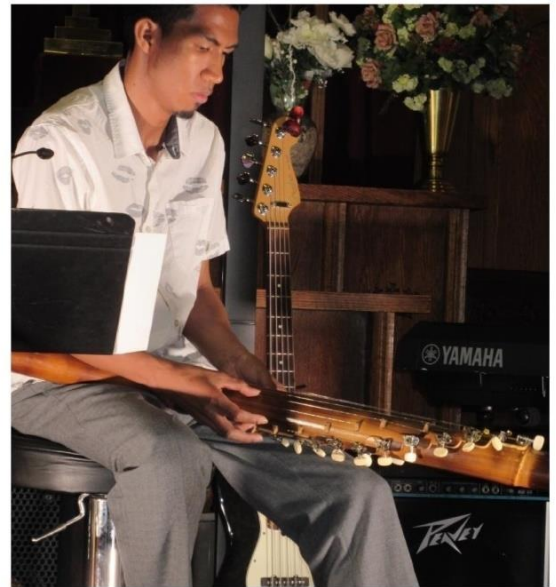


SEPTEMBER 2016

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FOREST HILLS 7032 112TH ST. CORNER OF 71ST RD. TEL: 718 268 4036 EMAIL: PRESBYFH@TWCBC.COM

# FPC-FIA Heart of the News

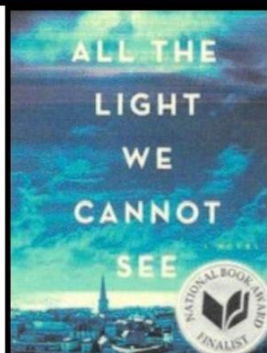
For more news check out Pastor Lohr's blog <http://presbyfh.blogspot.com>







A NEW BOOK  
DISCUSSION  
GROUP IS ON TAP  
TO MEET OCT 5 AT  
THE MANSE 7PM  
EMAIL JANICE  
LOHR IF YOU PLAN  
TO ATTEND



1. Pastor Jack (left) & Nadina Grants at Worship Service in the Park
2. Jazz ensemble, Summer Serenade from (left to right) Shu Odamuru, Kazu Odagiri, Mino Razafimpamonjy, Bruno Razafindrakoto, & Alan Lenarcic.
3. Tom Caldin on saxophone (left) with Herndon Lackey.
4. Mino Razafimpamonjy performing on the valiha.
5. A cappella harmonies, (left to right) Herndon & Mindy Lackey, John Biswas & David Barnett.
6. Residents of the Forest View Nursing Home preparing to sing.
7. Brianne & Nevaeh, preparing to perform for the residents.
8. Forest View resident Josephine Filippelli, who celebrated her 102nd birthday on May 30. HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
9. Our NEW ORGAN which was installed on August 21, it was in use for the first time at Sunday service. Many thanks to our members and friends that ensured the blessings of music for years to come.

#### DATES FOR THE FALL AND WINTER EVENTS

**Every Sun., 10 am--Bible Study & Sunday School  
11 am--Worship**

**Tues., Sept 20, 7-8 pm, and every week after--  
Christian Meditation. All welcome.**

**Sun., Sept 25 & Sun., Dec 4--Care Crew nursing  
home visits**

**Oct. 2--World Communion Sunday**

**Wed., Oct. 5, 7-8 pm--Book Group at the Manse  
"All the Light We Cannot See"**

**Sun., Oct. 9, after worship--Join the Care Crew in  
a visioning workshop. Dream with us!**

**Sat., Nov. 5--Organ Dedication Recital  
featuring David J. Yurick and guests**

**3 Sundays (TBD) in Oct., 10 AM--New Member  
Class**

**October 21-23--Church Retreat**

**Nov. 20--Stewardship Sunday and Lunch**

**Wednesday Covered Dish--Resuming in Advent**

## *Triennium*

Before returning to academia, six of our youth—**Josh and Dawn Brewer, Gabriel Gallego, Henry Ventura, Daniel Monteagudo, Jarrod Sinibaldi—together with Lydia Tembo** had the opportunity of attending the Presbyterian Youth Triennium from July 19-23 at Purdue University. This gathering, which occurs every three years, brings together young people from around the country for activities and worship experiences designed to deepen faith and encourage leadership.

## **Pastor's Corner: "On Facing Racism, Even Here"**

*by Jack Lohr, Pastor*

I make an effort to be inclusive of all races and cultures in the images on our bulletin cover, music I select, sources I quote. I know I am a "white" male pastor, and the truth is, I have benefited from the system of "white supremacy" on which our nation and church were founded. I confess that I inherited a sense of "The White Man's Burden," in the best possible reading of the Kipling poem, combined with a strong vocation to humble service. This was challenged and (partially) overthrown by my classmates in the Swarthmore African-American Student Society. In my years of ministry I have participated in and led programs in anti-racism training and "Racism Study Circles." I try to welcome feedback to confront my implicit (and explicit) prejudices, and I am grateful to be in a congregation where this has the potential to produce much personal growth for us all.

This is a preface to my invitation for you to join me in a heart-felt discussion of issues of racism, which we need to face here in the First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills, and here in Queens. Genesis 1:26 declares that, while humans have many differences, we are all children of God, made in the image of God, and therefore of equal worth, value, and dignity. As one of my favorite hymns put it, "Join hands, disciples of the faith, whate'er your race may be! All children of the living God are surely kin to me." Yet even in our diverse and loving congregation, we must acknowledge the inescapable reality of unconscious racial bias, and our failures to give equal notice to all persons.

The Session voted in June to make "Racial Justice" one of two central themes for the coming year, as in our ministry we "try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ." (The other theme was "Gun Violence.") Following up on that decision, and responding to the actions of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on "Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community," I am proposing to engage with you in the following ways:

- Challenge ourselves to examine our implicit bias in structures that support and maintain racism, regardless of the good intentions of individual Presbyterians. We may participate in the Harvard Implicit Attitudes Project at <http://tinyurl.com/bzqq43f> and ask what issues of race remain to be addressed here at FPCFH.
- Use a series of six, hour-long study guides for adults or teens produced by the PC(USA). These guides can empower our church to have important conversations about race and racism in relation to the Christian faith. They are available at <http://tinyurl.com/fpcfStudyGuides/>
- Write up and share the story of our work on dismantling racism.
- Be more intentional to identify persons of color as the sources of quotations and resources we use in worship, sermons, and study.
- Address local issues of racism in our communities, as we become aware of them.

I ask for your prayers and your hearty engagement with these issues. I believe we have a real potential for growth through this process.



## God's Love in Action: Church Care Crew

by Mindy Lackey, Care Crew Chair



**What is our Care Crew?** Our Care Crew is LOVE. It is the love of **Irene Balram, April Miller, Ingrid Anthony, Nadina Grants** and others who phone when you miss church and say, "I missed seeing you today and want to make sure you're okay." It's the love of **Michelle, Jessica, Karl**, and our other drivers who offer you a ride to a scary doctor's appointment, or show up just to be with you

through a tough time. Our Care Crew is the love of **Martha Knight**, offering assistance when someone is challenged to care for two sick family members. It's the love of **Delores Key**, who in the midst of grieving the loss of her own husband, her child, grandchild or godson (she has faced so much loss in recent years), calls to report, "I'm going to stay at my daughter's for a few days but I'm taking my church directory, the care crew list and my cards, because I really want to send a card to everyone on our list this weekend."

Our Care Crew is the ministry of our Board of Deacons, and it is also the love of more than half the congregation that comes together four times per year to make music and visit with the residents at Forest View Nursing Center. It's the love of **Bruno, John, Lois, David** and everyone who goes the extra mile to prepare the music and songbooks for these events.

The most recent visit took place on June 13. The program celebrated songs of Summer, as well as the lives of residents with birthdays in that month— **Kevin Cumiskey, Elizabeth Wilburn, Mary Guthrie, Herbert Shinper**. To the strains of "By the Sea, By the Beautiful Sea," we also honored **Josephine Filippelli**, who turned 102 on May 30. Two of our younger members, **Brianne Raymond** and **Nevaeh Mintzner**, also joined us, and delighted the residents by performing Justin Bieber's song "Love Yourself."

Dates for the fall and winter visits to Forest View have been set for September 25 and December 4. Everyone is welcomed to attend. If you do not sing, come anyway to speak with the residents, or just sit with them and offer companionship. They are happy for the company and love to tell their own stories.

This fall, the Care Crew will gather to spend some time envisioning its future. We are blessed to have Pastor Jack modelling expert pastoral care and joining with love in every aspect of the care crew's ministry. Want to be involved? Email the Pastor ([jacklohr@gmail.com](mailto:jacklohr@gmail.com)), Michelle for the Deacons ([michie@andrewloeb.com](mailto:michie@andrewloeb.com)) or myself ([mklackey@seedimpact.org](mailto:mklackey@seedimpact.org)).

## Update on Flags of All Nations at FPCFH

In July, the church began an initiative to display a flag in our sanctuary representing every nation from which our diverse membership is drawn. An order form was distributed, and, so far, requests have come for Austria, Barbados, Ecuador, Guyana, Jamaica, Madagascar, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, the U.S. and Zambia.

There is still time to order your national flag. Order forms are available each Sunday at the back of the church.

## Church to Offer “Christian Meditation” Sessions

*Want to feel more alive and connected to people?*

*Longing for quiet in your day to commune with God?*

Pastor Jack Lohr and Mindy Lackey invite you to join them in creating a Christian Meditation Community at First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills. Pastor Jack points out, “From the time of the Early Church, there has been a stream of mystical practice, from John Cassian (5th c.) and the Desert Ascetics,” and this form of meditation continues in the World Community for Christian Meditation.

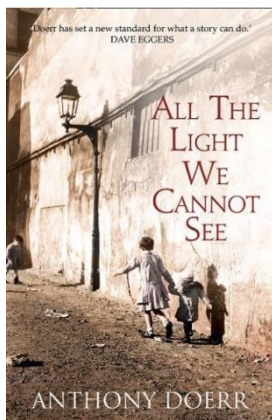


The program starts Sept. 20, introducing the practice and then meeting weekly Tuesdays, 7-8 PM. If there is interest, morning gatherings could be added. Sessions will be structured in the tradition of Fr. John Main ([www.wccm.org](http://www.wccm.org)), a British priest and Benedictine monk who established a meditation practice in the early 1970s built around a prayer phase, or mantra. Ours will be the only such group in Queens (<http://christianmeditation.us/new-york-city.php>). ALL traditions and faiths are welcome!

For individuals, the brief time of experiencing a quieter mind awakens the appetite for living differently and for ongoing spiritual and community connectedness. Whether you choose to join the group or not, you might want to try integrating this practice into your personal prayer or Bible reading time.

This is the “how to” for the modern practice of Christian meditation:

- Sit down. Sit still with your back straight. Close your eyes lightly. Then interiorly, silently begin to recite a single word - a prayer word or mantra. We recommend the ancient Christian prayer-word “Maranatha.” Say it as four equal syllables [‘ma - ra - na - tha’]. Breathe normally and give your full attention to the word as you say it, silently, gently, faithfully and above all - simply. The essence of meditation is simplicity. Stay with the same word during the whole meditation and from day to day.
- Simply listen to the word as you say it. Lay aside all thoughts (even good thoughts), images and other words. Don’t fight your distractions, but let them go by saying your word faithfully, gently and attentively and returning to it immediately when you realize you have stopped saying it, or when your attention wanders.
- This is simply silent prayer. Silence means letting go of thoughts. Stillness means letting go of desire. Simplicity means letting go of self-analysis.
- Meditate twice a day every day. This daily practice of prayer may take time to develop. Be patient. When you give up, start again.



## New Book Group to Meet at the Manse

Janice Lohr will host a new Book Group, October 5, 7 PM, at the Manse, 112-06 70th Road. The first selection is *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. This Pulitzer Prize winning book follows a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. **Please email Janice** if you plan to attend: [lohr07417@yahoo.com](mailto:lohr07417@yahoo.com). Thank you.