

July 29, 2022

Dear Members and Friends of FPC Moorestown:

This verse leapt from the pages of Deuteronomy the way passages sometimes do. I attribute such impactful moments to the Holy Spirit giving me what I need to hear, precisely when I need to hear it. This was what I read one morning during my devotionals a few weeks ago. Moses was the speaker of these words. He directed them to Joshua, his younger assistant and the next leader of the God's people. The two men stood looking into a land promised by God. It was a beautiful place to live but many challenges awaited Joshua. Moses said to him:

**“Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you.  
He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.” (Deuteronomy 31:8)**

Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. Did God read my mind? I'll confess that I need to regularly bat away worries and weariness. Both emotions show up in my heart and mind frequently these days. I'm frustrated that this pandemic won't go away. I think about people from our Church Family that I haven't seen in a long time. I worry, because don't know what's ahead for us a congregation.

Challenges littered the Promised Land, though it was God's destiny for God's people. There's a future for us that's filled with hope, though we face our own challenges. All I know is that fear and discouragement are of no use to me or us. Both drain and diminish me. Both keep me from living faithfully. The antidote to these two ills is the assurance of God's presence as we move into the unknown. **“The Lord will personally go ahead of you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.”**

I have a few important things to share with you. I hope you'll help me as I'll help you keep fear and discouragement at bay.

### **NEW COVID GUIDELINES**

I'm pleased that Session decided to reconsider our COVID guidelines. Effective from Sunday, July 17, Session approved the following COVID-19 guidelines:

- *Mask optional for worship. Those who feel more comfortable wearing a mask are welcomed/encouraged to do so.*
- *Congregational singing to be resumed.*
- *Food can be served indoors with appropriate precautions to reduce increased contact.*

Though we have yet another variant in our midst, Session felt that we've come to the place where we can make masking optional. We'll always respect those who wish to mask. Your Session has maintained a reasonable concern for the health and safety of our members coupled with an awareness of added strain upon our medical community. Session is also desirous to see our mission and ministry move ahead. We'll continue to monitor the state of COVID and adjust our guidelines as needed. I thank you once more for your patience and support.

## **JOHN ROBERTS HIRED AS YOUTH DIRECTOR**

Our Personnel Team recently voted to fill the youth director vacancy with the contracted services of John Roberts. John is the Young Life Area Director for Burlington County. Beginning September 1, John will serve alongside with youth advisors to lead our weekly middle school and high school youth groups. Young Life is John's full-time ministry and job. He's graciously committing ten hours a week to help us with our weekly youth ministry programs. Additionally, John will reach out to our young people as he attends concerts and sporting events at local schools.

John graduated from Grove City College in 2017 with a dual degree in Finance and Accounting. In the fall of 2017, after passing the CPA exams, John started his job as an auditor at a firm called RSM outside of Philadelphia. Around the same time John became a volunteer Young Life leader at Owen J. Roberts High School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. It didn't take long for John to fall in love with kids and the ministry of Young Life, and after a year and a half of working in the business world he joined Young Life's staff associate training program. Two years later (Fall of 2021), through a series of circumstances that can only be attributed to God's providence, John accepted the role of Area Director in Burlington County!



Some other facts:

- John was born in Moorestown NJ, in 1995.
- He is one of six children, and spent his childhood in Alabama, middle school years in Japan, and high school in Singapore.
- He loves being active, playing sports, reading, playing guitar, and spending time with family and friends.

You'll have the chance to meet John on Sunday, September 11 when he will help lead worship at both services. You can greet him at the special Coffee Hour we're planning for the time between our 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship service and our 11:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship service.

God has given us John and I thank him for this answer to prayer. I believe that this is a full-time position however. The Personnel Team plans to resume the search late this fall for a youth director. John is aware of our plans and is happy to serve as long as he's needed.

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## FIFTH SUNDAY WORSHIP, CONGREGATIONAL MEETING & GENERAL ASSEMBLY REVIEW

This coming Sunday, July 31, we'll celebrate a summer Fifth Sunday. We gather for a single worship service at **9:30 a.m.** in Miller Commons. When we combine our worship services for a Fifth Sunday, we blend the best of our traditional and contemporary worship styles.

At the close of worship, we'll have a special meeting of the congregation.

*The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown, New Jersey, has called a special meeting of the congregation. This meeting will be held Sunday, July 31, 2022 immediately following the 9:30 AM worship service which will be held in Miller Commons.*

*The purpose of the meeting is to elect an Elder, Deacon and Trustee to a term of office beginning immediately. No other business may be brought before the congregation other than the preceding item.*

The 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly met earlier this summer. This year's hybrid, three-week General Assembly broke new ground by meeting in-person in Louisville and later via Zoom. Elder Becca Neindorff served as a commissioner to the Assembly representing our Presbytery For Southern New Jersey. Following our Fifth Sunday worship and special meeting of the congregation, we'll review the highlights of the Assembly with a report from Becca. The GA Review will be held in Miller Commons about 15 minutes after the close of the congregational meeting. The meeting will be live streamed. Be sure to review the summary of the Assembly beforehand (found on our website, events page, eblast).

### A CODA

It's the middle of summer and many of you are spending your weekends traveling. Please remember to stay current with your financial commitment to our Church Family. Thank you for your steadfast generosity.

Here's another gift from the Word of God that I also read in my morning devotional time. It's a coda to the words of Moses. **"I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15: 13)**

Yours in Christ,

*Stuart*

Stuart Spencer, Pastor