**March & April 2022**  **Volume 22 No. 1**

 **Greetings Chestnut Hill Church Family!**

**Chestnut Hill Views**

We are all so glad to be able to worship together in the sanctuary once more. COVID guidelines are relaxing, however we are still asking that you maintain social distancing and wear a mask if you so choose. Of course, if you feel ill or are experiencing any symptoms, we ask that you refrain from attending services until your symptoms subside.

Pastor Mark Stryjak joined us in January as our interim supply pastor and it has been a pleasure having him here. More from Pastor Mark on page 2. We also have Pastor Teresa Martin from St John’s UCC who will officiate both funerals and weddings while we continue to search for a new Pastor to lead us. Pastor Martin’s words on page 3.

Our annual Congregational Meeting was held on February 20, 2022 followed by our postponed “Souper Bowl Party.” If you would like a copy of the annual report, please email Robin Klobosits at secretary@chcucc.org or call the church office at 610-967-1196 to make your request.

There are still many volunteer opportunities within the church where you can highlight your talents or put your spare time to beneficial use. See page 4 for details.

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**Words from Pastor Mark Stryjak**

Hello members of Chestnut Hill UCC. I was asked if I would provide something for the newsletter this month, so I am going to provide a brief introduction of myself.

Since graduating from seminary and taking additional training as a chaplain for a year at Lancaster General, my spiritual journey has been nothing less than active! The last 8 years I had the opportunity to pastor two different churches, one in Southern Illinois and one back in Spring City, Pa. My wife and I are from Montgomery County so coming back to family was a big part for moving back to the area.

About my wife Kimberly, we met in seminary and were married in 2008 and since then, I say that I am happily married to my best friend and soul mate! Kimberly is also ordained in the UCC and completed her doctorate in ministry a couple of years ago! We have three children, Mikey, Logan, and Addyson. Currently, Logan travels with me every Sunday up to Chestnut Hill, while my wife takes our other two children to her church. I look forward to this drive and the time I can be with Logan as we share more "dad time" as he calls it. For those who have not met Logan, he is an active, creative, soon to be 8-year-old, with an imagination that is out of this world!

Since I began supply preaching at Chestnut Hill, it has provided me with some very good quality time, driving both to and from the church. I feel very blessed to be working and witnessing to God's love in ministry since 2009 and remain thankful for this opportunity to lead you all in worship!

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Mark Stryjak

Jeremiah 29:11-12 “For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”

**Words from Pastor Teresa Hughes-Martin**

I am honored to help Chestnut Hill through their transition. I have been ordained for 19 years as a minister in the United Church of Christ. I have served Saint John’s Coopersburg for just over five years. I truly hold to the idea that we are all families of God united by Jesus as a brother and Savior. I am also completing my Gestalt Pastoral Care and Spiritual direction training. I cannot charge a fee because I am not fully certified, but I am willing to meet with people seeking guidance. You can always reach me on my cell phone. The number is 717-654-4044.

**Church News**

**Supporting CHC**

**E-Offering** – We now offer online and automatic giving through myeoffering.com. If you are interested in making your offering via credit card or by automatic withdrawal through your checking account, please sign up today. Here’s how:

Instructions on How to Sign Up for Electronic Offering

**To create a new account, go to: www.members.myEoffering.com**

On Log in screen, click on “Register.”

Enter the following information: Name, E-mail, and choose a password that you will remember. Once you have this completed, click on “Register”, you will receive an email on how to finish registering. Once you have clicked on the link from email, you will need to login and then read the onscreen instructions and click the “Proceed” button.

Next, you will need to select a church, so click on “Churches” at the top of the screen. Next click on “Join a church+”. Search for Chestnut Hill Church, select the church which has our address showing, and “Join+”. You do not need to provide a member or envelope #.

After you have selected Chestnut Hill Church, you must add a wallet. Click on “Wallets” on the top of the screen and then “Add a Wallet+”. Follow the onscreen instructions as they come up on the screen...and click on “Add Wallet+”

To setup an offering, click on “Offerings” at the top of the page and “Add New Offering+”. Choose the option that best fits how often you would like to give and the date upon which to begin drawing those funds. Funding source is your choice from where to draw the funds (i.e. your checking account or credit card found in your “Wallets”). Remember to select the fund to which you would like your offering to go, enter an amount and if you choose to contribute to more than one fund, you have the option to do so.

Fees to use a checking or savings account are $.30 and these fees are determined by the credit card company.

**Church Logo T-Shirts:** We are looking to place a new order for church T-shirts. Currently, there is a small selection of sizes from our last order. If you are interested in ordering a t-shirt, please contact Debbie 610-390-9026 with the size S M L XL XXL and if you want a round neck or a V neck T-shirt. Cost will be determined based upon the number of shirts ordered.

**Thrivent Choice Program:** If you are a member of Thrivent Financial, make sure you select Chestnut Hill Church as a recipient of your Choice dollars.

**Amazon Smile:** If you shop through Amazon, make sure you are always going through smile.amazon.com and that Chestnut Hill Church is your chosen charity. Nearly every purchase earns us a contribution!

**Volunteer Opportunities**

There are many opportunities within the church to use your time and talents to help the church with its mission in this world. We are looking for folks to serve on the Board of Trustees (building and maintenance team) and the Missions Team. If you are interested in helping, see the following individuals: Trustees – Debbie Koder and Missions – Joan Slota. Many other committees are also looking for additional volunteers. Please see any Board Member for information on the different committees.

**Ways to Get Involved**

**Prayer Warrior Chain:** Some of you know, others may not, Chestnut Hill Church has a prayer chain through email. The prayer chain began when our previous Pastor was with us, so in the absence of a full time Pastor, we would like to keep the chain connected.

When a member of our congregation or friends/family need prayers during a difficult time, whether it be illness, injury, surgery, loss, etc, the prayer warriors take action through prayer. We do not meet physically, you pray in your own way in the privacy of your home.

If you would like to be a part of the prayer warriors please contact Becca Bogert at 610-730-0147 or email becca.10@netzero.net. I will need your email address and whenever there is a request I will send out an email to the group for prayers. As we all know prayers can produce miracles!

For anyone needing our prayers, you can contact me at the above email or phone and I will send out information you wish to share. All other information is kept confidential with me alone.

Thank you

Becca Bogert

**Grief Support Group:** The Grief Support Group, led by Craig Adams, continues to meet every month, on the last Saturday of the month. The group has been doing book studies and discovering how their grief helps them to live in this world and acknowledges that not everyone grieves in the same way. If you are interested in learning more, please call Craig Adams for more information 610-554-4967.

**After Service Fellowship:** We have successfully re-established fellowship after the Sunday services. Fellowship Hall has been bustling with people after church to share some refreshments and camaraderie. There is always something good to sample along with fresh coffee and beverages. Please join us and don’t forget to sign up for your turn to provide refreshments. The Sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the lower Narthex.

**Iron Pigs Faith Night:** Come join us for a night at the ballpark on **Friday, June 17th starting at 7:05**. Tickets are only **$11.00** for a fun night of faith and friendship, hot dogs and home runs! Contact Debbie Koder at 610-390-9026.

**Altar Flower Sponsorships:**

Do you enjoy seeing bright, fresh, flowers? Well, you can sponsor fresh altar flower arrangements in the following way. Sign up on the sheet posted in the lower Narthex for the date you wish to bring flowers. This is important because we do not want duplicate flowers in the same week. After you sign up, on that date, bring fresh flowers to church and place them on the altar. You may move the silk flowers that are currently on the altar or place your flowers in front or alongside of the silk flowers. Remember to take them with you after the service.

**Memorial Garden Spruce-up:**

Spring is just around the corner and our memorial garden needs a spring cleanup. We are looking at April 2nd from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. We need to remove some dead growth from the flower beds and put down mulch. Brett and Debbie will pick up triple ground mulch from Victory Gardens and help is needed to spread it around. Mike Gane has offered his tractor bucket/scoop to help, so that will make it easier to spread the mulch around the garden. If you can help, contact Debbie at 610-390-9026.

**Pastor Search Committee**

Committee members: Cynthia Buchter, chair; Becca Bogert; Carol Tice; Curt Heck; Debbie Koder; Marty Klobosits; and Robin Shedlaluskas.

The Search Committee has met a total of six times and has completed a Small Church Profile, which includes statistical information of the church along with detailed explanations of Who We Are; Who Is Our Neighbor; and Who Is God Calling Us to Become. Currently we are working on an advertisement which will be given to the Northeast Penn Conference (along with the Small Church Profile) to assist with providing materials to potential candidates interested in applying for this position. We have been in contact with the Northeast Penn conference notifying the conference of our near completion of these first steps and are now awaiting further instructions regarding the subsequent actions that need to be taken.
If anyone has any further questions, concerns, or comments, please contact a member of the Search Committee listed above.

**Personnel Team News**

The Personnel Team was very saddened to have accepted the resignation of Pastor Christian effective the end of the year, 2021, along with the resignation of then church secretary, Jessica Yaich. We are very pleased to announce that Robin Klobosits has accepted the position of church secretary and has been working diligently so that there has been no lapse in administrative coverage. She has been instrumental in getting together this newsletter so that all members can continue to stay informed about church business and happenings. Welcome Robin Klobosits!

We would also like to extend a warm, hearty welcome to Pastor Mark Stryjak who has agreed to provide worship leadership on Sunday mornings as we continue with the search process. He currently holds a full-time position as Chaplain at Reading Hospital. His wife and three children live in the Reading area, so it is a bit of a commute for Pastor Mark to be with us every Sunday, for which we are grateful. Welcome and Thank You, Pastor Mark!

Pastor Teresa Hughes-Martin of St John’s UCC in Coopersburg has graciously agreed to assist us with officiating at funerals and weddings for members of Chestnut Hill UCC while we continue through the search process. If her services are needed, please call the church office or her cell phone number to contact her.

Members of the Personnel Team are: Robin Shedlaluskas and Cindy Buchter. We are recruiting new members to be on this team. If interested, please contact either Robin or Cindy.

**Boy Scouts at the Church**

Church Council had been informed of a lawsuit which was being levied against the Boy Scouts of America organization (BSA). Much legal paperwork was received and given to the church lawyers, Steckel and Stopp, for their review prior to the Church Council making a final decision of whether or not to continue to be the Charter Organization for the troops who have been using our facility. The final decision made was not to renew our Charter Organization status, but to still allow the troops to continue to use the church facility under a Facility Use Agreement. We are still in the process of finalizing this transition but look forward to continuing our relationship with the Boy Scout troops.

**Annual Congregation Meeting Snippets**

The Annual Congregation Meeting was held after worship service on February 20, 2022. The first order of business conducted was the approval of new Council members: Curt Heck, Michael Gane, and Marjorie Trinkle. Welcome! We thank the following outgoing Church Council members for their years of service: Harry Rupp, Ken Debus, and Joan Slota.

The second order of business was the approval of the Chestnut Hill Church Cemetery Association revision/update of their Constitution and Bylaws which had been in place since 1992. A few changes were made to bring this document up to date, more current, and we are pleased to announce this motion was passed with the revised Constitution and By-Laws in effect starting February 20, 2022. Current Cemetery Board member are: Sam Leh, President; Brett Koder, Vice-President; Joan Slota, Secretary; Cindy Buchter, Treasurer; and Jeff Bogert, Member-at-Large/Sales. Should you have any questions/concerns/comments regarding the working of the cemetery, please contact a Board member.

**Sunday School News**

We are saddened to report that there is no in-person Sunday School happening at the present time. We are looking for individuals who would be willing to serve a lead role in organizing or teaching Sunday School classes. The lead role would require you to compile a list of individuals to lead classes on an alternating basis, or to lead yourself. Please contact either Robin Shedlaluskas or Cindy Buchter if you are interested in spearheading or participating in this most important activity of the church.

**Chair and Mat Yoga**

Both Chair and Mat Yoga are starting up again! Beginning on **Monday, March 14, 2022,** and continuing for **10 weeks**, join me **from 4:30 – 5:30 pm for Chair yoga** – getting fit where you sit!

Beginning on **Wednesday, March 16, 2022**, and continuing for **10 weeks**, join me from 5:30-6:30 pm for Mat yoga – benefits which go far beyond the mat!

Invite a friend to join you because yoga is for everyone! Benefits of yoga are many, including the following: increases circulation; strengthens muscles; improves flexibility; improves range of motion and mobility; improves proprioception; lubricates joints; reduces pain; improves concentration; and can promote better and more restful sleep.

You can attend one class or all on either/or/both Monday and Wednesday. Classes will be held in the church Fellowship Hall at Chestnut Hill Church UCC. Please call 610-751-1909 or email buchtecl@ptd.net to let me know if you will be joining or if you have any other questions. While classes are offered freely to all, a free-will offering will be accepted to help cover the costs of the use of the church facility. Please bring along your own mat (for mat yoga), a yoga strap (or bathrobe belt or man’s necktie), yoga blocks (or a towel), and a tennis ball – all props will be used to assist with your yoga practice. I look forward to seeing you at class!

Namaste,

Cindy Buchter

**Women Working Wonders!**

**WWW -** The former Whine, Women, Worry - *Has a new name!–* **Women Working Wonders!** This women’s fellowship group meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:00 pm. All are welcome. Our new name represents what our group is accomplishing. We have come up with lots of projects to reach out and help the community over the next year and we welcome any women who would like to be a part of “Women Working Wonders”. Even if you cannot attend some or all of the meetings, you can still participate in the events.

Some of our upcoming events include:

**Yard Sale**: If we can get the firehouse and Green Drop lined up, WWW will take on the yard sale. We will try to keep it on the 1st Saturday of October, with the prior week for drop off. If we can get someone from the firehouse to let us in, we hope to be able to accept donations some daytime hours and some nighttime hours. Nothing is final yet. We are still waiting to hear back from the firehouse.

**Hoagie Sales:** with the success of our first hoagie sale, we plan to hold two this year: April and October. In addition, we will have a food drive with donations for Betty Lou’s Pantry at the same time when people come to pick up their hoagies. We will also have bake sales and basket raffles like last year.

**Jewelry Resale Project**: Debbie Koder has a contact who would set up a locked box in the church to collect people’s unwanted jewelry, which she will evaluate and pay us, and guarantee a minimum of $200. We thought we might try this in September, after summer vacation. It is no work for us with the potential of bringing in some money to use to help in the community.

**Easter Eggs:** We are filling plastic easter eggs for the Children’s Home of Easton like we did last year. According to Debbie Koder, there are tons of plastic eggs left in the Sunday School closet. We are collecting small candies and very small toys. (Last year was difficult to put some of the items in the eggs!) There is a collection box in the Sunday school room at the church. Contact Becca Bogert with questions at 610-730-0147.

**Holiday Shoebox Project:** We also discussed taking over the Holiday Shoebox project that the Sunday School used to do. I have sent an email to the organization to receive more information when it becomes available. There are several who send shoeboxes overseas, but we would prefer to stay local with disadvantaged children in the Lehigh Valley – there certainly are a lot of those!

**Stockings for Soldiers:** This project was also discussed briefly, but we need a little more information to continue to plan this project. Stay tuned for updates.

**Weather Alert Boxes:** The Lehigh Conference of Churches accepts and prepares “Weather Alert Boxes” that they deliver to the homeless. Along with a list of food items they also request sweatshirts, sweatpants, hoodies, backpacks, tents, sleeping bags, etc. We thought we could pull some of the nicer items from the yard sale to add to that organization.

These are just the highlights of our meeting. We hope to become a more active, giving group, helping those in our community who have less than us. There is definitely a need, and we are a group who are eager and willing to help. Looking forward to accomplishing much this year. Thank you to every for all you do.

Alice Debus

**Betty Lou’s Pantry**

Currently **Betty Lou’s Pantry** is in need of jellies/jams (especially other than grape), toilet paper, side dishes, tuna helper, etc. Look for the bin in the Lower Narthex to place donations.

Chestnut Hill Church's 2022 dates for helping at distribution for Betty Lou’s Pantry are April 9th and April 23 from 8-11 am. They are looking for 5-6 people for each of those dates; specifically, 2 people to work in the shed and basement loading pre-packaged boxes/bags into the cars (at least one who can lift 40 lbs.) one person to man the help-yourself table's set up outside and 3 people using wagons to deliver food to the cars. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Lower Narthex. That also means that April is CHC’s month to supply 100 bottles of laundry detergent to BLP. Place any donations for food or laundry detergent in the bin located in the Lower Narthex and Alice or Laura will take it to BLP. If you have any questions, please see Alice Debus.

**Trustees Updates**

As with any older building, repairs are always ongoing. It has been a busy winter at CHC and several repairs have been made to make our church safe, comfortable, and looking good.

1. A railing was installed for the basement steps by the furnace.
2. The wall in the back hallway was painted where the old water fountain was removed and patched.
3. Window Blinds in the handicapped bathroom – reattached. Someone pulled on the cord too hard and pulled the blinds out of the bracket.
4. All the window blinds in the fellowship hall were twisted, so that they all face the same direction.
5. Some of the bottom kitchen and fellowship cabinet doors were loose, they were tightened up. Most probably from people using the cabinet door to support themselves when they opened the doors?
6. Put blocks of wood at the feet of the tables along the front of the fellowship hall wall – because the tables were being shoved up against the wall and the paint has been damaged.
7. The bathroom holding tank pump went bad in the fellowship hall closet for the HC bathroom, this was due to the usage and volume that New Vitae flushes.  Approx. 18 clients use that rest room minimum of 3 times a day = 54 flushes a day x approx. 4 days a week = 216 flushes a week! New Vitae will be paying for the repair and the new pump motor that was installed earlier in February.

      

**Financial Information**

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| **Checking / Savings Accounts:** |   |   |   |   |   |
| *(as of 2/28/2022)* |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | QNB General Savings |   |  $ 8,396.71  |   |   |
|   | Improvement Fund |   |  $ 9,117.34  |   |   |
|   | Special Savings |   |  $ 27,688.23  |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Investment Portfolio:** |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Miller Endownment |   |  $ 423,033.44  |   |  |
|   | Hoff Endowment |   |  $ 192,853.10  |   |  |
|   |   |   |   |   |  |
| **Cemetery Portfolio:** |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | QNB Checking |   |  $ 31,386.50  |   |   |
|   | QNB Savings |   |  $ 6,712.10  |   |   |
|   | Ameriprise |   |  $ 70,696.18  |   |  *as of 12/31/2021*  |