

Geneva Presbyterian Church

11931 Seven Locks Road, Potomac, MD 20854

(301) 424-4346 Office

www.genevapotomac.org

Rev. Patrick McElwaine, Pastor

Dear friends,

The Radiant is back, and what an issue we have to share! These past months have been a roller coaster of emotion: unforeseen challenges as well as unforeseen blessings. I am *grateful* for the ways we as a church family have continued to draw close to each other and our Lord for the courage to keep taking each day step by step. I am *encouraged* by our faithfulness and constant Christian care for neighbors, strangers, and siblings in Christ. And I am *excited* for the ways the Holy Spirit is at work in our midst even now.



The word on my mind as I write to you is “expectation”.

First, expectation for what God is going to do with and through Geneva Presbyterian Church in 2021. We have just recently concluded our **Everyone Together** stewardship campaign, and I am inspired by your generosity. We are committed to our calling as disciples of Christ and we are moving forward in bold new ways for the sake of the Gospel. Thank you for your dedication to generous financial giving that supports our ministry and makes our important work possible. Whether through a pledge or other means of giving throughout the year, we celebrate and honor every gift made in faith. If you intend to make a financial commitment but have not yet done so, please be in communication with Office Administrator Melissa Cutler at Melissa.genevapotomac@gmail.com.

Second, Advent itself is a season of expectation. This year we will be worshipping and preparing to meet Christ in the manger in both new and familiar ways. I encourage everyone to enjoy the Advent goody bags our Deacons and helpers will deliver around Thanksgiving. They will include scripture readings to focus your spirit as we approach Christmas, an Advent wreath to decorate and light during Sunday worship, and goodies for adults and kiddos alike.

Finally, I am thinking of how we are looking forward with expectation to beginning live streaming and recording from the Geneva Presbyterian sanctuary. Please be sure to read Worship Elder Tom Sadler’s update later in this issue of The Radiant -- it includes a detailed briefing of our progress as well as pictures from “installation days” with our contractor. It will be a joy to worship together virtually from our beautiful church

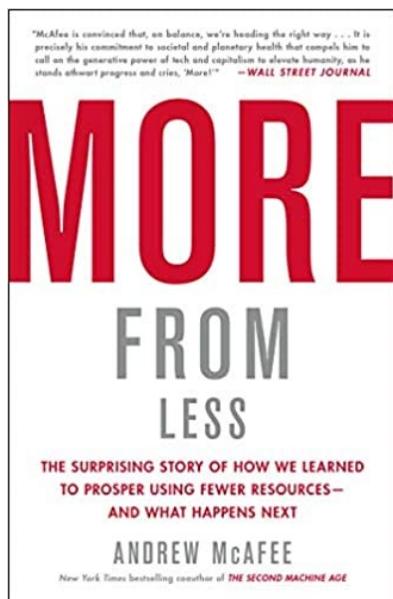
sanctuary and it will be a joy to continue widening our “circle of welcome” to include people geographically near and far.

If you are looking for a few engaging reading options, here are two books I have read recently that I commend to you, too:



“So You Want To Talk About Race” by Ijeoma Oluo

“So You Want To Talk About Race” is an engaging and vital book in which Oluo sets the stage for honest, robust, and unflinching reflection on a wide range of topics related to race. As a black woman, Oluo shares from her own life as a lens to approach frank subjects such as “Is police brutality really about race?”, “What is the school-to-prison pipeline?”, “Why can’t I touch your hair?”, “But what if I hate Al Sharpton?”, and “I just got called racist, what do I do now?”. With a mix of wit, statistics, and masterful storytelling, for me this is a “must read”.



“More From Less: The Surprising Story Of How We Learned To Prosper Using Fewer Resources -- And What Happens Next” by Andrew McAfee

How about that for a subtitle? “More From Less” delivered on that promise for me: the surprising story of how “The Four Horsemen of the Optimist” as McAfee terms them (capitalism, technological progress, public awareness, and responsive government) are helping us to be better stewards of God’s good creation. He argues that technology is helping us to use fewer physical resources at the same time the other “Horsemen” are driving us towards improved earth care. The way McAfee sees it, we’re doing better than we might think even though there’s much to improve.

I hope these books are engaging and fruitful reads should you decide to check them out. May God continue to bless you richly and may our spirits be renewed in faith as we travel the Advent journey of preparation this season.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Patrick

Update from Our Music Director!



My dearest Geneva family,

I am so happy to be writing to you all again! These last 8 months have been incredibly strange and difficult. The infinite love, support, and prayers that we have all shared have certainly not gone unheard! We were able to quickly adapt to an online platform (Zoom) and with the help of Kyla Lupo and Tom Sadler, Pastor Patrick and I have been able to continue ministry without fail. I know I am eternally grateful for all they have done for us. In addition to our dynamic duo, Melissa, our new office manager, has been a wonderful addition to the team. Welcome!

During these eight months we have had a few musical guests come in and I was tasked with educating myself on how to make videos. I'm usually up for a challenge and this did not disappoint! I learned how to take different recordings or videos and put them into iMovie and add some effects, balance the sound, add an opening and closing title page, and how to layer multiple videos! I do think they have added a little something to our worship services and I hope you have enjoyed hearing our choir sing again. I reminisce and dearly miss the times when we can all be together, worshipping and making music together as a church family. I am hopeful that we will be able to return and again be together in the future.

We begin our Advent journey on November 29 and the choir will be filling our services with gorgeous music the entire month. Their first anthem, "Light in the Heart of Winter", is based on a traditional Irish melody that was set to the W.B. Yeats poem Down by the Sally Gardens. The song was made famous by the prolific 20th century composer Benjamin Britten. Lloyd Larson has taken this melody and set it to some beautiful text by Nancy Middlem:

"The golden glow of autumn has left us long ago.
The gath'ring clouds of winter have touched the pines with snow. The wind
sings a song of longing, As the sky turns cold and gray.
But a Light in the heart of winter Will warm the chill away."

The Light referring to of course our Lord and Saviour, baby Jesus. I can't wait for you to hear the rest of the song at the end of this month! In October, I started writing a little blurb about the music in each of the services. I shall continue to do so in the coming months and into the new year.

While we may not have our bell quartet playing for Christmas Eve, we will have another surprise to make it a special service nonetheless! I hope you will come, enjoy worship, and welcome the newborn King!

Ben Shaver

Christmas Eve Service

On Christmas Eve, Lessons and Carols Service will be at 5:30 PM.



Worship & Music Update

Dear Geneva Presbyterian Church Friends & Family:

It has been an exciting albeit weird year for our Church. To say the least 2020 has been a long roller coaster ride filled with tumultuous change and new norms that require much patience.

From online service via Zoom, to having communion at home, to the 'hello' and 'until we meet again' waving by our congregants at the end of each service, worship has taken a different meaning and been a different experience for all of us this year. Pastor Patrick, Music Director Ben Shaver, Zoom Hosts Kyla Lupo and Tom Sadler, and the lectors each and every week, have strived to bring a delightful, meaningful service through this new medium.

Zoom worship has enabled us to stay together, stay in touch with one another and worship and praise God together while staying physically and socially distant during this pandemic. We look forward to the future, to a time when we get to reopen our doors to our members and to the public. That change we know will be a welcomed change for many of us. It's funny how going 'back to normal' will feel like such a big change.

We have grown as a church under Zoom service. Our attendance is made up of many who live far away, who ordinarily would not be here. That technology and this COVID19 era has brought us together in ways we did not think possible just a year ago. That new and exciting togetherness will continue even after Geneva's physical doors re-open.

More change is on the horizon. This time a carefully planned and anticipated one. Geneva is in the midst of completing its long awaited plans to upgrade its audio and video capabilities in the sanctuary. The sound crew has evolved to become the AV Team composed of Ken Sprinkle, Ken Denaburg, Sheri Sankey and Tom Sadler. Together we have implemented the upgrades to worship service production.

The AV Team intends to hire a permanent position to assist our volunteers with the week-to-week production needs. We welcome any referral from you. If you know of someone who might be interested in this position, please contact any member of the AV Team.

As you can see from the pictures below, the Sanctuary is undergoing upgrades with wiring and installation of cameras, large-screen TVs and production equipment. None of this would be possible without the generosity and foresight of former long-time Geneva Member, Owen Allen.

Tom Sadler



Geneva Day School Update



Geneva Day School has been greatly impacted by the current COVID-19 pandemic. As of March 13, Geneva and other public and private county schools were closed due to orders by the Governor and the Health Department. This drastic measure was undertaken in an effort to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. Because of the surging numbers of cases in the spring, however, Geneva did not open for the duration of the school year.

During the week of March 16, Teaching staff, researched, planned, and discussed how to continue providing important instructional services for students using on-line or virtual teaching formats. Teachers planned large and small group ZOOM sessions, while Teaching Assistants made short resource videos on various lessons ranging from art and cooking, to literature and nature.

This was a very challenging period for Teachers who quickly had to transform their curriculum to be able to support student learning from home. Classes for older students had daily instruction, with Kindergarten teaching in groups for both mornings and afternoons. Other classes, provided all-class meetings during which activities were presented, such as circle time, literacy lessons, stories and poems, art, cooking, science, and more. Especially enjoyed were various "field trips" in a staff member's home or yard.

Though the ZOOM format was necessary to maintain contact and some instruction for students, it was widely recognized that it was not effective for all students. It often required parents or older siblings to provide assistance for students to focus and attend, and monitor performance skills.

Geneva learned in the late spring that it could offer a summer camp program as authorized by the county Recreation Department, but that it must be conducted entirely outside. The various restrictions and difficulties of providing such a program for young children persuaded the school to forgo an outside summer camp experience.

Instead, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Office of Child Care (OCC), updated its guidelines to allow schools to open during the summer in a similar capacity as during a regular school year. This more appropriate possibility allowed Geneva to plan and set up a Summer Program under new guidelines for a reduced number of children. The program was very successful, with no health incidents and good implementation of new guidelines. The experience also allowed the school to build on this success and properly plan for live classes at the usual start of a new school year.

Under new MSDE, Health Department, and CDC guidelines for reopening, Geneva prepared its own guidelines to explain to all staff and families under what conditions the school would be able to open during the pandemic. All staff and families signed a "Wellness Pledge" to abide by the school's reopening plans.

The most significant changes that the school undertook included reducing student enrollment and staff employment to meet the requirement of only 15 people in each class "pod," which were two staff and up to 13 students. In addition, the school required both staff and students to check-in at the start of each day with temperature readings and responding to 3 questions. All students and staff were required to wear masks throughout the day, daily practices for cleaning and sanitizing or disinfecting increased, as did hand washing routines. Exposure to others class and outsiders was limited, among other restrictions.

For the reopening, Geneva also invested in filters/purifiers for HVAC units to kill viruses, a sprayer to kill viruses daily on the playground and a vapor sprayer to kill viruses in classrooms weekly. It substituted rubber mats for carpets, plus acquired numerous safety supplies. These efforts were taken in the hopes of limiting virus exposures or transmissions.

With Kindergarten beginning on August 31, the preschool opened on September 8. Geneva had a very smooth opening for students who were thrilled to be back at school, as were their parents. All families were very supportive of the reopening guidelines, including the many modifications developed by the school for daily operation. To date, the school is not aware of any complaints from families, but only appreciation for its willingness to reopen live classes.

In mid-October, Geneva experienced the first of two COVID-19 situations. The first involved non-teaching office staff, and the second a classroom staff. Those that tested positive isolated for 10 days, and those with close contact quarantined for 14 days. The entire staff was tested, and all except 2 had negative results.

Initially the school closed for staff to be tested, and took a week for planning and preparing ZOOM lessons, and conducted Parent-Teacher Conferences. The school reopened the following week for live classes for all. The school reassigned staff as it could to provide coverage in classes.

Obviously, with reduced enrollment and tuition, and increased costs for supplies, the school realized that it would operate at a loss during the last and current school years. Geneva applied for and was awarded a number of grants, both federal and county, which allowed much appreciated income (nearly \$400,000) during this period to help reduce the impact of its losses.

The school's mission and primary goal has always been to “encourage a lifelong love of learning.” It felt, however, that it was very important to be able to open safely and conduct live classes under new state, local, and school reopening requirements. The critical factors were and are for children to continue learning, in a social setting with peers, and in various pre-academic subjects with interactive, multi-sensory, and hands-on experiences.

Geneva feels that it is on a “journey”, somewhat like early explorers, as it has some guidelines but not an exact “map” for its destination. We must be flexible as we respond to “shifting winds” and “adjust our sails” to be safe and protect students and their families, and staff and their families. In this “voyage,” cooperative efforts have been critical to success. Geneva staff have been just this, and have been amazing, professional, and positive throughout. Though we had a couple of setbacks, we believe that we can “navigate” this very taxing and difficult period in the coming months. Our wonderful staff have all contributed to making this a reality already.

As we look forward and traverse the “waters,” we are confident that Geneva will continue to implement its mission and, most importantly, survive. We are thankful for the support and prayers of many church friends, especially Pastor Patrick, and the Geneva Board of Directors under the leadership of Renee Moloznik. We wish each of you a lovely Thanksgiving season, as we all have much for which to be grateful. With warm regards, and best wishes for continued safety and good health,

Suzanne Funk, Director



Treasurer Report

2020, an interesting year. To quote the Grateful Dead, “What a long, strange trip it's been”. As I write this, we still aren't sure of the outcome of last week's election. There's good news about a vaccine, but we don't know when vaccinations will begin, or when we can come back to some sense of “normal”. And although we are half way through November, I still do not have a good forecast of how we will end up our financial year – it certainly will not look anything like what we budgeted this time last year.

That makes this year's budget process even more interesting than usual. This is the time when the Executive Committee and Session develop next year's budget, which is typically based on income and expenses from past years. That's why we also have a Stewardship Campaign at this point of our year – your pledges for next year's giving allows us in part to figure out what we can spend. But again, 2020 . . .

Will next year look anything like this year? When will it be safe to open our church again? When will our Day School resume normal operation? What will I present to you as our 2021 budget at next spring's annual congregation meeting? Lots of questions, with uncertain answers.

I started this note with a quote from the Grateful Dead – I will end it with a quote from Robert F Kennedy. In a speech he gave in 1966, he said *“There is a Chinese curse which says, ‘May he live in interesting times.’ Like it or not, we live in interesting times.”*

Amen to that . . . please stay safe and healthy!

Rolf Winch, Treasurer

Deacon and Fellowship Activities

The Advent Season begins on Sunday, November 29 and continues until Christmas Day, December 25. The Deacons and Fellowship Committee are working on an Advent Goodie Bag filled with Advent activities and goodies for you and your family. **The Advent Goodie Bags will be delivered to our Geneva Families in time for the first Sunday of Advent.**

The Goodie Bags will include:

- **Advent Wreath:** Every family will receive an Advent Wreath that can be easily assembled and used during our Sunday services.
- **Advent 2020 Acts of Kindness:** This envelope will contain 24 different ways to show acts of kindness to your family or community. There are also blank cards for you to add other ideas for acts of kindness.
- **Advent Scripture Calendar:** This envelope will contain 24 cards with a beautiful picture of a wreath and a specific scripture. Each day is paired with a section of scripture going through the Christmas story, and a discussion question to dive deeper into what Christmas is all about. We hope that you will look forward to getting your family or friends together every night this December to read the Word of God and discuss its meaning. The final card is a beautiful picture that can be framed.
- **Christmas Bingo:** You will receive several Christmas bingo cards and bingo markers to be used for our Zoom Bingo Game. **Our bingo game will be held on Sunday, December 13 at 4:00 PM.** Zoom information will be sent out at a later date. Prizes will be delivered to winners the week after the game.
- **Christmas Ornaments:** Wooden ornaments will be provided along with markers and stickers, so you can create your own personal ornaments for your Christmas tree.
- **Geneva ornament:** Every family will receive a special ornament from Geneva for your tree.
- **Delicious goodies** – cookies, candies and nuts!! Yum!

Deacon Family Groups

Every Geneva member and friend is included on a Deacon Family Group. Your Family Deacon works with Pastor Patrick to celebrate your joys and support you in times of concern or need. During this time of COVID, the Deacons have been hosting Family Group Zoom meetings to help support communication and fellowship. We have found that it is easier to have 2 or more Family Groups join together for our Zoom meetings. Your Family Deacon should be contacting you in the next weeks to set up a meeting. We hope that you will be able to join us. If you or anyone you know, needs help in joining in the meeting, please contact your Deacon or Renee Moloznik, Deacon Moderator (Rmoloz@hotmail.com)

Renee Moloznik

Fellowship

I joined Session this year just as the pandemic was starting up - an interesting time to be the chair of Fellowship! It really helps to have a wonderful and active committee.

Rhonda, Renee, and Jane, with help from some others, came up with the idea of the church goodie bags, which they filled and delivered to our members in September.

We held our first in person fellowship event on Saturday, November 14, from 1 to 2 pm. We followed COVID-19 best practices, including face masks, temperature checks and screening questions. We celebrated Pastor Patrick's birthday with Birthday cake, brownies and cookies, as well as cider and coffee. A good time was had by all.



We will continue to come up with ways to stay connected, and we are always looking for new ideas. Please let any of us know if you have an idea or activity for Fellowship, or if you would like to help.

Thank you,
Elaine Winch, Fellowship Chair

Mission Report

January 2020: \$500 from GPC to Montgomery County Public schools for school lunches. Thanks to Renee Moliznik and Jane Campbell for the suggestion!

February 2020: \$500 from GPC to Scotland AME Zion Church. Thanks to (who made this great suggestion?) for the suggestion!

March 2020: \$500 from GPC to Casa Ruby, a resource for LGBTQ youth in recognition of increased domestic violence due to COVID. Thanks to Elaine Winch for the suggestion!

April 2020: \$500 from GPC to cause topical in April. Thanks to YOU, member of the congregation, for the suggestion!

May 2020: \$500 from GPC to Massanetta Springs Mission in gratitude for their hospitality to our bell choir. Thanks to Patrick McElwaine for the suggestion!

June 2020: \$500 from GPC to cause topical in June. Thanks to YOU, member of the congregation, for the suggestion!

July 2020: \$500 from GPC to Interfaith Works as part of their back-to-school drive. Thanks to Ken Denaburg for the suggestion!

August 2020: \$500 from GPC to World Central Kitchen in recognition of the deadly explosion in Beirut, Lebanon. Thanks to (who made this great suggestion?) for the suggestion!

September 2020: \$170.19 from GPC Mission Committee for gift bags to the congregation. This was an exceptional donation, in concert with Deacons and Fellowship, since COVID has made us all the mission of Mission. Thanks to Rhonda Ricci and Renee Moloznik for the suggestion!

October 2020: \$500 from GPC to Manna Food Center. Thanks to Elaine Winch for the suggestion!

November 2020: \$500 from GPC to Manna Food Center. Thanks to Elaine Winch for the suggestion!

December 2020: \$500 from GPC to The Village at Rockville for Christmas boxes for their skilled nursing care residents. Thanks to Rhonda Ricci for the suggestion!

COVID is squashing visions we had of educational events at the church concerning the missions. COVID means we are performing "checkbook activism" right now, and that's not bad stewardship of doing what we can with what we have.

We are in fact a little behind on this ideal, but we're way out ahead of where we were in 2019!

YTD, Mission has spent \$4179.19, an average of \$379.11 per month.

Jane Campbell

Grace and Gratitude: As Presbyterians we are a people rooted in the grace of Jesus Christ. It is our gratitude for God's grace that moves us to join in God's mission in the world, with ministries of love and justice, reconciliation and peace.

Generous gifts to the *Presbyterian Giving Catalog* are signs of our gratitude: feeding the hungry, comforting the brokenhearted, and sharing our faith with young and old. By joining our gifts together, however large or small, we expand our witness to God's gracious and abundant work in the world.

Each gift in the *Presbyterian Giving Catalog* exemplifies the work prayerfully carried out by ministries of Presbyterian Mission. The purchase and distribution of animals, the building of wells to provide life-giving clean water to entire communities, and ministries to youth and young adults are among the ways your gift is filling a need, making an impact, and providing hope here in the United States and around the globe.

This holiday season Geneva will be participating in the *Presbyterian Giving Catalog* mission. We will be collecting donations through December 31st. All gifts can be life changing for the recipient.

How can you give?

- Choose the gift you'd like to give.

Sample items you can purchase:

Supplies for Displaced Students \$30
Kitchen Kit \$25
Rainwater Catchment System \$75
Piglet \$40
Farming Tools \$10

Fishing Net \$15
Refugee Food Basket \$50
Jerry Cans \$25
Family of Chickens \$25
Rice Seeds \$15

- Make your check payable to "Geneva Presbyterian Church" mail to the church office:

11931 Seven Locks Road
Potomac, MD 20854

- All checks must be received by December 31st.

Thank you for your generosity,

Rhonda Ricci, Fellowship

Jane Campbell, Mission



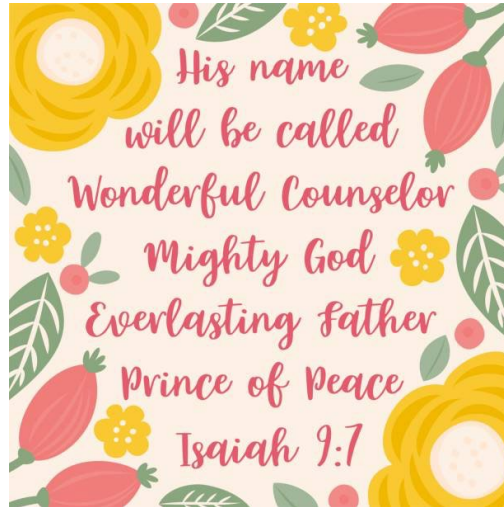
Dec 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30	01	02	03	04	05
10:30am - Worship			7:00pm - Bible Study	7:00pm - GDS Board	7:00pm - Book Club	
06	07	08	09	10	11	12
10:30am - Worship			7:00pm - Bible Study		7:00pm - Book Club	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
10:30am - Worship 4:00pm - Christmas Bingo			7:00pm - Bible Study		7:00pm - Book Club	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
10:30am - Worship	7:00pm - Executive Committee			5:30pm - Christmas Eve Service		
27	28	29	30	31		
10:30am - Worship						

Church staff will be celebrating the holidays from Noon on December 24 through January 2. For pastoral emergencies during this time please contact Pastor Patrick. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Jan 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
10:30am - Worship			7:00pm - Bible Study		7:00pm - Book Club	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
10:30am - Worship			7:00pm - Bible Study		7:00pm - Book Club	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
10:30am - Worship	7:00pm - Executive Committee		7:00pm - Bible Study		7:00pm - Book Club	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
10:30am - Worship	7:00pm - Sessions		7:00pm - Bible Study		7:00pm - Book Club	



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