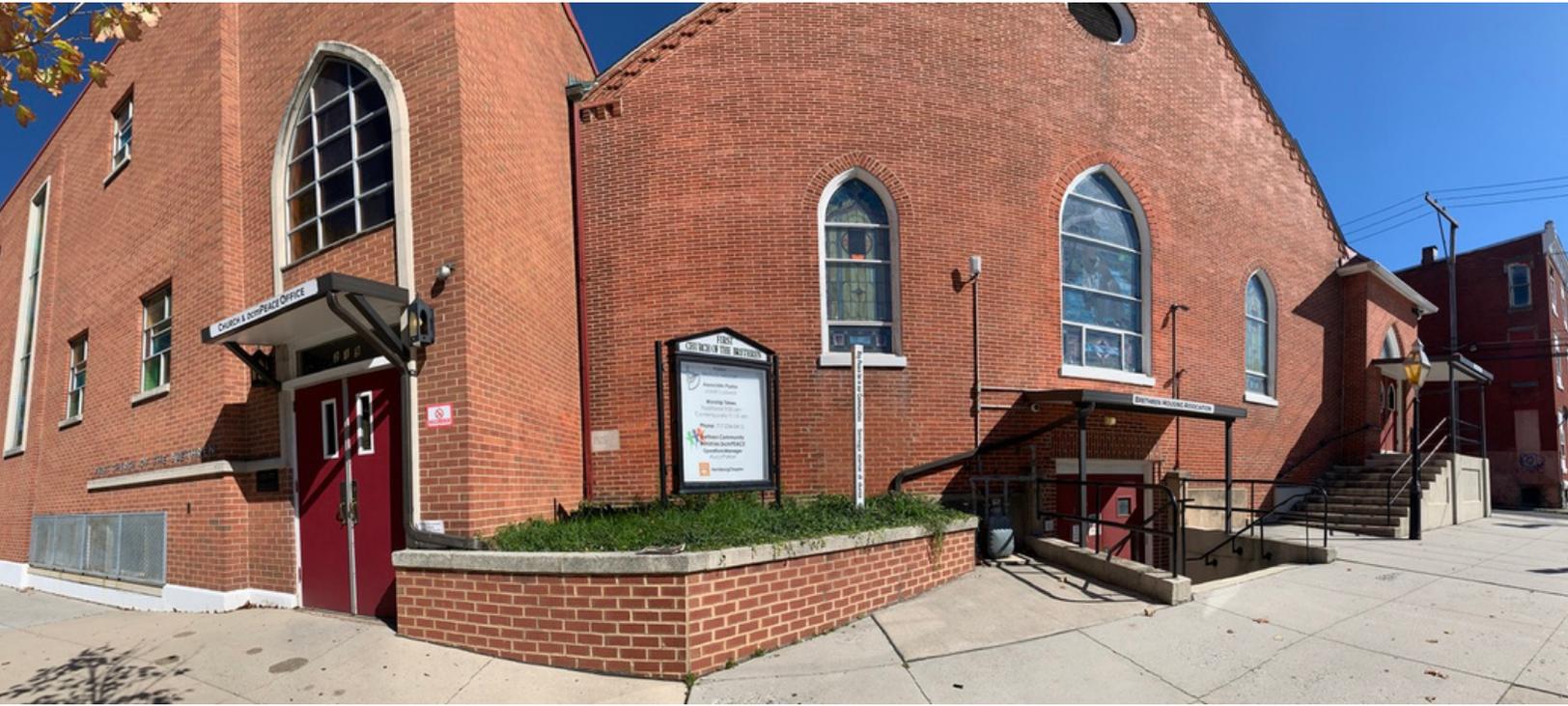


February 2022

The Growing Edge

Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren | 219 Hummel St. Harrisburg, PA 17104



A Prayer for March

Written by Devin Dixon-Rosario

Dear God,

This month we thank you for all women you have created beautifully in your image. We thank you for our mothers, sisters, and siblings in Christ. We ask that you continue to uplift and empower your women in hopes of continuous overflow.

Luke 1:45

"And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

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Title

Written by Pastor Lexi Aligarbes

There are so many things that I am excited about for the life of this congregation. In March, we are looking to start back some of our Christian Education programs. We will be having an education hour for children in preschool through 5th grade. After service, we will be having sermon “talk-backs” so that our older congregants can have an opportunity for discussion as well as have time to jump deeper into that week’s scripture. We continue to have Midweek Morning Meditations on Wednesday and it has been so special to see the way God is revealing God’s self to different members of our faith community. These are just some of the joys I get to experience as a pastor and that I thank God for. However, as excited as I am for the way the Spirit is alive and at work here at First Church, I can’t help but to be grateful for all of the women in ministry who have gone before me.

Being a co-pastor of a congregation is a privilege that I know is not afforded to all women and would not have been a possibility for me just a couple of decades earlier within the Church of the Brethren. For so many reasons, I am grateful for the women who sought ordination even when they were told that pastors should be men. I am grateful for all the women who found ways to serve their communities using their gifts of teaching, healing, cooking, and so much more. I am especially grateful for the women in my life who helped me to understand my own call to ministry. Without their faith and their example I would not be where I am today. So as I get to witness the growth of Harrisburg First, I am appreciative of all the women who have been a part of the foundation of this congregation. And moving forward, I hope that God will continue to empower our community to recognize and cultivate the giftings of the women among us.



A Celebration of Women

Written by Pastor Josiah Ludwick

As we enter Women's History Month, I am struck by the amazing group of women that call and have called our Faith Community Home. In my relatively short time here at Harrisburg First, I have come across so many incredible women who have given their all for the kingdom and for this faith community. A few names that come to mind are: Althea Gingrich, who once volunteered in our church office into her 80s, who helped others with tax preparation and transportation well into her 90s.

I think of Janet Batdorf, who literally WAS our Christian Education team, spearheading Sunday School and VBS efforts, who also literally WAS our kitchen committee, spearheading special events and meals for the church and the community. Janet was also the consummate hostess who on several occasions even opened her own home to house those who needed shelter for long stints of time.

Waverly Chadwick, Always on the back door to welcome any and everyone who enters our building, Waverly faithfully taught Friday Bible Study and was active in food ministry for decades. A wonderful prayerful woman, she also served for years as an usher and greeter, not to mention filling our pews with her extended family every Mother's Day. To this day, Waverly remains one of our prayer warriors and yearns to be present in worship with us soon.

Pastor Belita Mitchell– The first Black female to be called to the position of Moderator for the denomination, Belita was also the first Female of Color to be called to our pastorate. Belita served for nearly 2 decades and brought our church from relative obscurity to being a leader in the denomination and surrounding community in terms of justice work for the kingdom. She continues to support our ministry as an active member and her presence remains invaluable to where God is taking His church.

While these are a few that come to mind in our past and present, we also have incredible women in just about every leadership role in our church today. Our Co-Pastor, bcmPEACE's Operations Manager, Christian Ed Team Leader, Building Resources Team Leader, Special Services Team Leader (also "church grandma":)), deacons, musicians, greeters, ushers, team members, young adults, youth, etc... incredible women have been a part of our past, remain a part of our present and will continue to be a part of our future.

Let's not miss this opportunity to celebrate the incredible women God has called to serve here. They've heard the call. They've answered the call. And our faith community is so much richer as a result. Praise God for each one!!!



Overcoming Boundaries

Written by Marvin Blenkle

When my parents were at my age, they could not have been at the place, where I am now.

Growing up in East Germany under occupation of the Soviet Union, my parents were not blessed with the same privileges that I have today. I am part of the first generation of my family that grew up in a free, independent and prosperous environment. As part of that environment, I find myself bound to uphold the values that enabled me to come here.

I have come to the realization that now, it is my responsibility to secure the promise, that all men are created equal, that we are all endowed with certain unalienable rights. Without the dedication of others to this cause, I would not be at the place, where I am now. Not everyone is able to travel abroad, explore new cultures and stand up for what they believe in. Therefore, I regard my service as a privilege.

In the following year, I am looking forward to engage into various projects of Brethren Community Ministries, such as food distribution, computer classes and attending the Agape and youth group meetings. Every Sunday, I help to record and stream the service for our members that cannot participate in person. Part of my duties also include managing data for multiple projects.

I have only been here for a few weeks, but I've already learned so much about the community of Harrisburg. Coming from a very different place, where people speak and look differently, getting adjusted has been challenging for me. But the hospitality and generosity of this community have given me the strength to find balance during this sudden change.

To ensure that the very reason of why I can be here today is not perceived as a pleasure, but as a drive for us to engage in the difficulties that face us, I hope to serve this community well and to overcome whatever boundaries that lie ahead of us.

Life by the Spirit
(Galatians 5:13)

"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love."



Our Community Ministries

bcmPEACE

"Serving Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier community empowered by God's peace."

Get Connected!

- Make sure you are receiving our monthly Newsletter
- Donate your unwanted clothes to Community Aid using our partner number #10018
- Come take a tour of the space and community
- Become a Board Member
- Become a Mentor
- So many more opportunities!

Add it to the Calendar

Upcoming Events

- May 14th – Mental Health Fair
- May 21st – Highmark Walk for A Healthy Community
- June 19th – 23rd – Vacation Bible School
- September 8th (TBD) – Be The Peace Banquet
- November 20th (TBD) – Bowl-a-thon



Good News!

- Agape Satyagraha participants are continuing to go through the program while graduates celebrated Black History Month in deep discussion around Blackness and Mental Health.
- We have gained another 2 new Computer Class participants! Our lab is one person away from being full!
- Pathway to Prosperity is impacting 5 individuals right now as we work with them to gain emergency assistance with unemployment, passports, job searches, housing, and more.
- Our Wellness Hub is impacting the lives of an average 130 households each week! We are currently looking at re-instituting the morning Bible Study classes and short Worship time to add the inclusion of spiritual wellness with the physical wellness. We are hoping this can start back up in April.

WALK FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY



It is that time of year again – time for the annual Highmark Walk for A Healthy Community!

This is an annual fundraiser where we raise money to carry on the programs and operations at bcmPEACE! For the next two months, we will be asking our friends and family to support the work that bcmPEACE is doing to "serve Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier community empowered by God's peace"!

Please spread the word, engage with us, and support our work here in South Allison Hill!

Register, Donate, or Form a team now at www.bcmpeace.org!

If you need assistance or have questions, please contact Alyssa Parker at brethren.com.min@gmail.com

Make sure you are keeping up with all things bcmPEACE by checking out our website www.bcmpeace.org! Also if you are not already receiving our Monthly newsletter, we would love for you to sign up for our mailing list. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to serve Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier, community empowered by God's Peace!



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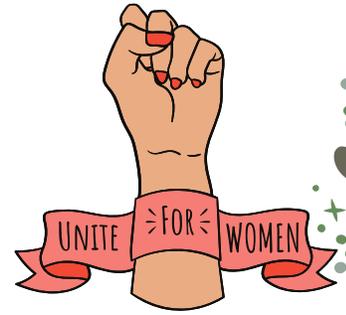
/www.bcmpeace.org

Faith and Justice Corner

Women of the 8th

shared by Pastor Josiah Ludwick

This past month, several of our young adults took the opportunity to attend a play at the Gamut Theater entitled Echoes of Voices of the 8th which focused the history of the Historically Black neighborhood here in Harrisburg called the Old 8th Ward. If you haven't heard the story at this point, I want to encourage you to look into it. The short version is that this amazing diverse community which served as a center for art, culinary delights, public discourse and notably a refuge for those escaping slavery was bulldozed to make way for our State Capitol just a stone's throw away. The play in essence was encouraging us today to hear the voices of the past, to recognize their strength and to cling to the truth that no matter how hard life may seem, we all matter. We heard from several strong female voices from that time. To learn about some of these women, check out: <https://humanitiesinplace.wordpress.com/rhythms-of-resilience-in-the-eighth-from-abolition-to-suffrage/>



Activism In Brazil: Marielle Franco

shared by Pastor Lexi Aligarbes

During my first year at seminary I was introduced to the life and work of Marielle Franco. Marielle grew up to pursue a post-secondary education, work on political campaigns, and successfully secure a position on Rio de Janeiro's city council. She understood that securing human rights for the people in her neighborhood, in her favela, would mean securing human rights for all of Brazil's citizens. Favelas are neighborhoods that arose shortly after Brazil's abolition of slavery, in 1888. The formerly enslaved afro population were not provided integration policies into Brazilian society. As a result, they had to make their own way in terms of finding employment as well as building a space for them to live. Yet, because of their limited access to resources, these favelas consisted of small wooden homes without electricity or running water. Yet, despite the discrimination that residents of these favelas face in terms of both racism and classism, these neighborhoods have been the locus of change for Brazilian society. There is so much to say about the life and legacy of Marielle Franco. And there are so many ways we can connect her work to our neighborhood of South Allison Hill. Since March is Women's History Month, I can't think of a better person to honor and remember at this time. My hope is that you can learn more about her story, about the dreams she had for her neighbors, and maybe even learn about ways we can all be better neighbors to one another.

To learn more about Marielle Franco visit: <https://www.opendemocracy.net> or watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72-QbwDnUQI>

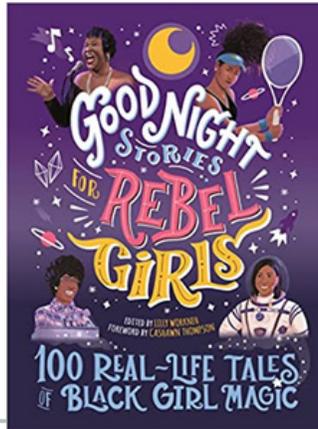


The Youth Corner

Social Justice Library Book of the Month!

Good Night
Stories for Rebel
Girls: 100 Real-Life
Tales of Black Girl
Magic

by Lilly Workneh



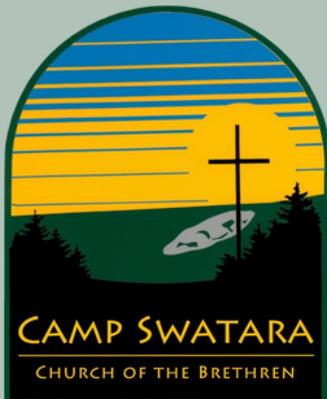
This children's book is a collection of stories highlighting black women and girls who have made an impact on our world. These voices come from all around the world and have such different stories. Everyone should embrace their inner Black Girl Magic!

Fun Fact: There are 3 other books in this series you can also read!

Want to go to camp?!

Registration is beginning for summer camps of all ages in June and July!

If you need help with registration or costs, please email Alyssa Parker at brethren.com.min@gmail.com.





Find all ten words:	W J E P S A C T A P
Jesus	E Q L L U F A W L R
Lent	D J G E O R V R M A
Ash	N E A F N V P C Q Y
Wednesday	E P R R I T E L W E
Dust	S A C R I F I C E R
Prayer	D U S T F W Y R Z N
Alms	A R Y H V A L M S D
Fasting	Y Z B J E S U S H U
Sacrifice	Z J F A S T I N G F
Purple	

Unscramble these Lenten Words

TRYFO YASD _____

HSESA _____

NLTE _____

TISFGNA _____

One thing I can do during Lent to bring me closer to God...

© 2017 RealLifeAtHome.com

Make sure you come out and join us every other Sunday for Youth Group (grades 6–12)!

The next dates are 2nd and 13th and the 27th

Congregational News and Announcements

"The church is more than just a community of believers. It's a family united by their love for Christ."

Sunday Bible Study

Same Purpose, Different Format

Beginning March 6 we will resume Sunday Bible Study but it will be in the form of a "talk-back" following the service.

This will include going deeper into scripture and discussing the sermon. There will be a primary class available for that age range as well as the Young Disciples continuing past its normal time to accommodate childcare.



Praise Reports

- We are starting up Bible Study and Sunday School again!
- It is the Lenten season – let us continue to praise the Lord during this time of reflection and renewal.
- We give praise for our staff and volunteers

Want to Help?

Sign Up to volunteer in April for some important worship roles! We love having different people volunteer to have these leadership roles. You all are AMAZING!

check what you would be interested in and return the office via hard copy or email

3 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
 ___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
 ___ Time for Young Disciples

10 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
 ___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
 ___ Time for Young Disciples

17 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
 ___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
 ___ Time for Young Disciples

24 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
 ___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
 ___ Time for Young Disciples

Prayer Requests

- Marvin Brummell and Bill Holland will both be going into surgery this month – please keep them in your prayers.
- Please keep the family of Rosie Fisher in your thoughts and prayers as they grieve the loss of Rosie's brother.
- Keep all those grieving the loss of loved ones, relationships, etc. in your prayers.
- Prayers for peace during this time of war.

Mid-week Meditations



Join Pastor Lexi for a morning meditation every Wednesday at 9am! We will be highlighting different forms of spiritual practices, prayer, and meditation. Look forward to seeing you all there!

More Announcements



Want to purchase some altar flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one?

Contact the church office at office@hbgfirstcob.org for a form!

Upcoming Conferences

- National Young Adult Conference – May 27–30
 - "I Am Because We Are" (Romans 12:5)
 - Register NOW at www.brethren.org/yya/yac/
- Annual Conference – July 10–14
 - "Embracing One Another As Christ Embraces Us" (Romans 15:7) Romans 15:7
 - Registration Opens March 1st at www.brethren.org/ac2022/
- National Youth Conference – July 23 – 28
 - "Foundational" (Colossians 2:5–7)
 - Register NOW at www.brethren.org/nyc/registration/


Embracing
one another
as Christ
embraces us



FOUNDATIONAL

ALL-CHURCH CLEANING DAY

On **April 23, 2022**, the Building Resources Team has planned an all-church cleaning day. Before the pandemic, these cleaning days were semi-annual affairs – one in the spring and one in the fall. COVID changed that schedule, just as it changed virtually every aspect of our lives. But now we are getting back to our former routines.

Structurally, we try to get started around 8:30 AM.

Donuts and coffee provided! As are cleaning supplies. We have an outside team that, among other things, cleans up the parking lots, performs maintenance on the fence back by the garage, and weeds if necessary. The indoor work consists mainly of washing the pews and cleaning the kitchen. Other jobs may pop up.

We try to end by noon. We worship in a large, old building and it requires occasional special TLC. Many hands make light work. All-church Cleaning Day is also an opportunity for newcomers to the congregation and old hands to get to know each other a little better.

Please put April 23 in your calendar as we focus on spring housecleaning our church building!

Thanks in advance..



Lenten and Easter Plans

It's hard to believe that the season of Lent is already upon us, but this means that we have some things to look forward to and that celebrating the Resurrection is right around the corner. Here is what is coming in this season:

Advent Devotionals from Brethren Press are available now. You can either see Woodrow Ziegler on a Sunday morning or contact the church office and we will get a copy in your hands. This daily devotional for the Lenten Season was written by Walt Wiltschek and can be obtained for \$8. Get yours while they last!

Atlantic Northeast District Lenten Bible Study will take place weekly on Wednesdays during Lent at 6:30. To register, Go to: www.ane-cob.org

Love Feast will take place in person on Maundy Thursday, April 14 at 6:30pm. We are still determining whether this will be outdoors at Reservoir Park or here at First Church in the Fellowship Hall. Stay tuned for details

Resurrection Sunday will be celebrated on April 17 and will begin with breakfast in the Fellowship Hall at 9am. Our Resurrection Celebration Service will begin around 10am. Please make plans to attend this wonderful day of fellowship and celebration

Even More Announcements



Virtual Women's Spring Fellowship 2022

“CONNECTING THROUGH OUR STORIES”

You will have the opportunity to watch the presentation from Liz, enjoy a special selection of violin music from teen-aged sisters from the Ephrata Church of the Brethren and select a small-group session to participate in. Registered participants will receive a link to the main presentation, to be watched at their convenience prior to attending a small-group session.

Various Dates to Choose From for Small Groups:

Saturday March 19, 10:30am

Tuesday, March 22, 10:00am

Sunday, March 27, 4pm

Thursday, March 31, 7:30pm

Saturday, April 2, 9:30am

Registration closes March 15 online (March 7 if you must register by mail). The registration fee is \$5.00.

You can register by using the ANE District website, www.ane-cob.org.

Our offering this year will be donated to Brethren Disaster Relief Ministries. (After any expenses are met, the remaining monies will be donated to BDM).



Mark Your Calendars!

On May 14th, 2022 the ANE District Urban Initiative team will be hosting the event, The Church: Alive to Thrive. This will be a time of worship, testimonial, and fellowship with other urban congregations in the ANE District. Stay tuned for more information about this event and for registration details.



COBYS Banquet Program Presentation
Foster Care • Adoption • Counseling • Education



Senior Foster Care Caseworkers Heather Martin (pictured) and Keri Miller share the importance of their work in the face of realities of child and family welfare.

Online presentation
Thursday, March 10 at 7 p.m.

To view this presentation, be sure to subscribe to COBYS Family Services on youtube.



March Birthdays & Anniversaries!

- 8. John R. Nantz
- 11. Waneta Benson
- 13. William Hayes
- 17. Waverly Chadwick
- 21. Jim Boswell
- 24. Eric Benson
- 24. Helen Fuge
- 25. Tyquan Reddick
- 28. Belita Mitchell
- 31. Robert Brode

if you have something you want included in the Growing Edge, please send the material in to the office by
March 20th



Spring Special Offering

Our Special Offering for the One Great Hour of Sharing Campaign will be on Sunday, March 20th and it will go towards the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren. You may hear about this through church announcements as well. Please support this special offering if you are able.

Don't forget to set your clocks to spring forward for Daylight Savings!

March 13th



Happy Anniversary!



Don & Belita Mitchell
March 2nd



February ANE District Prayer Calendar

Pray for this Church

This Church is Praying for Us

6 Mar 22	<u>Florin (Mount Joy, PA)</u>	<u>Myerstown (Myerstown, PA)</u>
13 Mar 22	<u>Philadelphia First (Wyndmoor, PA)</u>	<u>Light Of The Gospel Fellowship Staten Island (Staten Island, NY)</u>
20 Mar 22	<u>Green Tree (Oaks, PA)</u>	<u>Nuevo Amanecer (Bethlehem, PA)</u>
27 Mar 22	<u>Un Nuevo Renacer Fellowship (Mountville, PA)</u>	<u>Sanford Fellowship (Sanford, ME)</u>

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March 2022

The Growing Edge

The monthly newsletter of the Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren

Josiah Ludwick, HFCoB Co-Pastor

Lexi Aligarbes, HFCoB Co-Pastor

Alyssa Parker, bcmPEACE
Operations Manager

Devin Dixon-Rosario, HFCoB
Administrative Assistant

Marvin Blenkle, Brethren Volunteer
Service

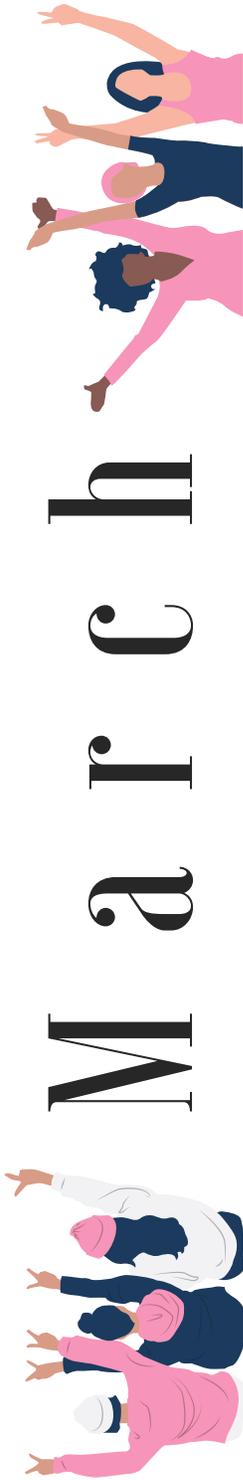
Don-Valliant Mitchell, Custodian

Our Staff

“ We are called to be a Christ-centered multi-cultural community in the inner city, sharing the love, healing, peace and justice of Christ. ”



The Growing Edge is a publication of Harrisburg First Church of The Brethren for our members, friends, and neighbors.



March

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	1 MCT MEETING	2	3	4	5 THELMA MCGARY MEMORIAL @10:30
6 YOUNG ADULTS	7 ICONOGRAPHY TEAM MEETING @6	8 CHRISTIAN ED MEETING@6PM STEWARDSHIP MEETING @4	9	10	11	12 DEACON RETREAT
13 YOUTH GROUP	14 BCMPEACE MEETING	15 SPIRITUAL LIFE MEETING @ 6	16	17	18	19
20 YOUNG ADULTS	21 BUILDING RESOURCES MEETING @4	22 DISCERNMENT TEAM MEETING @5	23	24	25	26
27 YOUTH GROUP	28	29	30	31	1	2

**INDOOR AND ZOOM
WORSHIP AT 10AM**

**STAFF MEETING
@ 12:30PM**

**AGAPE SATYAGRAHA @ 5PM
COMPUTER CLASS @ 10:30AM &
2:30PM**

**PASTOR
JOSHIAH'S
DAY OFF**

**WELLNESS HUB
@10AM**

**MIDWEEK MEDITATIONS @9AM
PASTOR
LEXI'S
DAY OFF**

**PASTOR
LEXI'S
DAY OFF**