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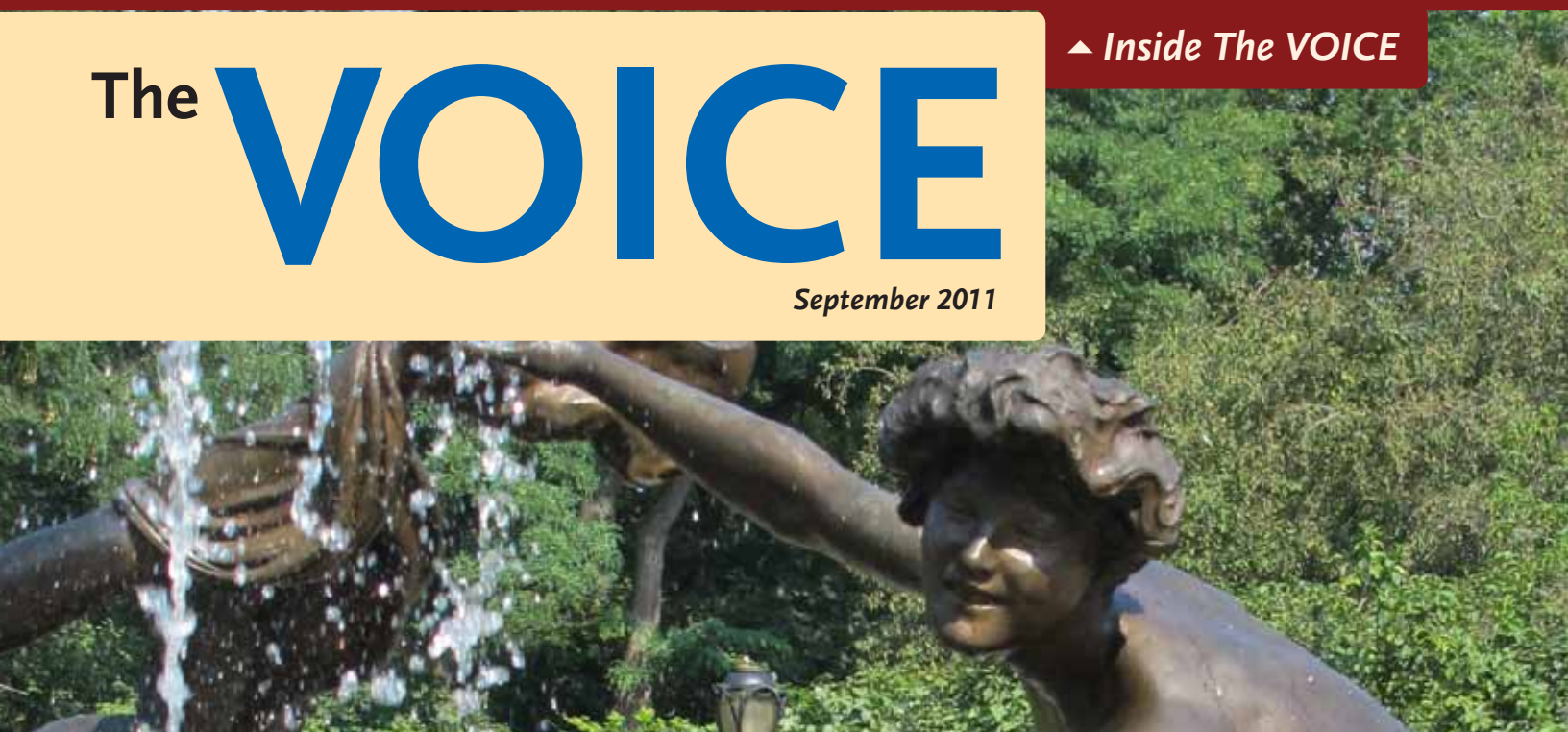
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The VOICE

September 2011



Shall We Dance?

To be human is to practice the sacred dance of our faith.

—Scott Black Johnston



The 10-week Fall Sermon Series—"Dancing in the Spirit: Choreography for the Children of God"—begins Sunday, Sept. 18. Above: Walter Schott, Three Dancing Maidens (1910), Central Park.

If you're up for a pilgrimage this fall, to a place where beauty meets mystery, and whispers of the divine, you don't have to travel far. Visit the *Three Dancing Maidens*, the sculpture in Central Park's Conservatory Garden, just inside the gate at Fifth Avenue and East 103rd Street.

About all that is known about the Maidens is that they are the creation of the German sculptor Walter Schott, they were given life in Berlin in 1910, and they arrived in Central Park as a gift of the Samuel Untermyer family in 1947, eight years after the sculptor's death.

One of the more intriguing, if unverified, stories about the Maidens is that they stood in the path of the to-be-constructed Berlin Wall, and only the family's generosity saved them from destruction. Now the Wall is gone, and the Maidens dance on.

In his Fall Sermon Series, "Dancing in the Spirit," senior pastor Scott Black Johnston poses a question: *What does it mean to be human?* Is life a forced march, or do we take the Creator's hand and answer "yes" when invited to dance?

As the stories in this month's VOICE demonstrate, dancing in the spirit can be frightening, even perilous, even as it is ultimately life-affirming. One woman discovers art, and faith, in the ashes of 9/11 (page 3). Another finds a sense of purpose on a mission trip to Guatemala (page 7). A congregation answers the call to shelter the homeless, and is transformed by the experience (page 4).

What does it mean to be human? Visit the Maidens for your answer. Notice the unbounded joy in their movement, even as they dance, fearlessly and eternally, on the edge.

TREASURER'S REPORT | *First Half 2011*



Tiffany Cochran

By Tiffany Cochran

The beginning of a new program year, with the launch of the 2012 Pledge Campaign just a few weeks away, makes September a vibrant month at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. We are fortunate—me in particular, as I step into my new role as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees—that FAPC is operating on such solid financial ground.

Through the first half of this year, the church's revenues have exceeded our budget forecast, while expenses have remained below budget. Worship offerings—including pledge revenues, plate collections and non-pledge contributions—totaled \$1.5 million through June, up 16% from a year ago. Expenses came in \$198,000 under budget, thanks to careful monitoring of costs and timing (some of our budgeted expenses do not come due until later in the year).

In the second quarter, we made a payment of \$500,000 toward the remaining debt from our 2003–04 construction and renovation program (the Crossroads Campaign). This debt currently totals \$1.5 million. We are on schedule to retire this debt by 2013.

Thanks to your faithful fulfillment of your pledges, and the continued diligence of our staff and officers in controlling our expenses, we are confident that we will conclude 2011 on budget.

We are grateful that your generosity sustains the financial well-being of this church. We are counting on your ongoing support in the months ahead to ensure that we have the resources to make 2012 an even stronger year—not just for us who worship here, but for all those whom we serve in our neighborhood, and around the world.

Securing the Windows

In August, as part of FAPC's capital improvement program, the Property Committee had scaffolding set up in the Sanctuary so that the windows and masonry could be inspected for needed repairs. In addition to what worshippers saw in the balcony, scaffolding also was erected in the passageway between the Rose Window at the rear of the Sanctuary and the window that fronts Fifth Avenue (*left*).

Also last month, the balcony window in Kirkland Chapel—which had been removed to repair buckling, cracks and breakage in its lower panes—was reinstalled (*right*). Now fully restored, Jesus and the seven Archangels are once again ready to watch over members and visitors to FAPC.



AFTER 9/11 *Brenda Berkman Turned to Activism, Art ... and Faith*

September 11, 2001, was supposed to be Brenda Berkman's day off. Then she turned on her television.

"It was obvious that this was going to be a big, high-rise fire and rescue effort," she recalls. "And I thought, 'There's got to be something the Fire Department is going to need that I can help with. I've got to get there.'"

Berkman at the time was a lieutenant in Ladder 12 in Chelsea, one of only 25 women in the FDNY's force of 11,500. She was among the first responders at Ground Zero. The experience left physical and emotional scars. It also awakened a renewed commitment to activism, an outpouring of creativity and a spirituality she never knew she had.

Shortly after 9/11, Berkman noticed a lack of media coverage about the women assisting the rescue at Ground Zero and the Pentagon. She launched an awareness campaign on behalf of those women that led to meetings on Capitol Hill, public appearances around the country and some increased visibility, at last. In an interview published in 2008, Berkman recounted her experience at Ground Zero and what fuels her activism.

"What I don't want to have happen is that the efforts of the women at Ground Zero end up being some grad student's research project 25 years down the line because nobody had ever heard of us," she said. "I think it's important for people to know that women were there, because these women were dedicated [and] they made enormous sacrifices." *

After retiring from the FDNY in 2006, Berkman took up painting and drawing. Art opened an avenue of self-expression that has helped her contend with the memories of 9/11. "With the 10th anniversary coming up, I started looking around to see what the different museums and galleries were going to do, and frankly I didn't find much of anything," she says. "So I decided I would do something myself."

In partnership with Westbeth Artists' Housing, Berkman organized *The 9-11 Decade: Fourteen Artists Remember and Reflect*, on view at the Westbeth Gallery Annex through Sept. 17. Berkman provided the central image for the show, a cowering figure that recalls the shock, fear and anguish of 9/11. Each artist has drawn from that image to create a collection of pieces that reflect on the past decade from diverse perspectives. Berkman's final image (one of nine she has contributed to the exhibit) depicts the cowering figure transformed into an artist—with head raised and hands open, ready to find healing, and meaning, through creativity.

Perhaps the most surprising change in Berkman's life in the decade since 9/11 has been her involvement with Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, and the deepening faith that has come with it.

Berkman had attended FAPC sporadically after moving to New York City in 1975. She mostly needed a church where



Brenda Berkman's post-9/11 art finds the phoenix rising in the ashes (upper left) and the birth of an artist in the aftermath of tragedy (right).

she could take her mother when she visited. She was not what you would call a woman of faith. The community here gradually drew her in.

She was attracted to FAPC's outreach ministries, particularly its work with the homeless and the homebound, and its mission trips. She began volunteering with Meals on Wheels and the shelter. She became a member of the Board of Deacons in 2009. She joined the mission trip to Cairo the following year.

During worship, she came to realize that "the sermons and music really spoke to me."

"After 9/11, many of us who were personally affected—by loss of family members, as first responders, as survivors—we looked at what we were doing with our lives with changed perspectives," she says. "I found that I was less interested in career, and more interested in spiritual concerns. FAPC has provided me with a community within which I can serve, as well as explore and grow in faith."

DETAILS

Copies of Women at Ground Zero: Stories of Courage and Compassion are on sale in the Shop at FAPC. The exhibition The 9-11 Decade is on view through Sept. 17 at the Westbeth Gallery Annex, 55 Bethune St., in the West Village. Berkman's art can be viewed online at <http://berkman.myexpose.com>.

* *From Women at Ground Zero: Stories of Courage and Compassion, by Susan Hagen and Mary Carouba (Storybook Press, 2008).*

SHELTER: 25 & STILL NEEDED

This year the shelter at FAPC is a quarter-century old. On Sunday, Sept. 25, the church will host a special event to honor this vital ministry and the volunteers who keep it alive. The VOICE offers a brief history of the modest, 12-bed refuge that has become a central part of FAPC's mission.

By John Crane

Alex Shaw, 47, was studying and working part time at Brooklyn College when a serious fall caused him to lose his job and then his apartment. He lived for five years on New York City's streets and in its cavernous shelters. Then something happened that changed his life dramatically.

He found the shelter operated by Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

"I thank God for the volunteers and for those in the congregation who make this place available to us and who give their kindness and warmth and Christian charity," he said recalling his experience in the shelter. "I mean that sincerely, because I've lived in cardboard boxes on the street. I've walked the street hungry and cold. I've had icicles on my eyebrows and hair when it was snowing. I often thought I was going to die."

Shaw, who was a guest at FAPC's shelter in 1991, is one of hundreds of men who have experienced the warmth and hospitality of FAPC's shelter during the past 25 years. A large number of these men (26 in just the last two years) subsequently found permanent housing through the church and its affiliate support organizations.

The shelter was originally set up on a trial basis in April 1986 on the third floor of the church house, in what is now Jones Auditorium. At that time, six men were housed each night from Monday to Friday. The original hosts were FAPC officers who brought snacks and stayed with the men overnight. Several of the men soon found apartments of their own.

"The experiment was an unqualified success, despite some severe reservations at the time," recalls Ken Henderson, now president of the Board of Trustees, who chaired a 1986 task force studying whether the church should establish a shelter. "We anticipated a lot of problems and initially recommended that the church consider helping other shelters, rather than forming one of our own. Fortunately, working with the Partnership for the Homeless, the church was able to overcome these obstacles and establish a shelter that was badly needed at the time."

In fact, the shelter was so successful that the program was soon expanded to seven days a week year round, with volunteers from the entire congregation. In 1991, the church



Notes from History

"One of the first shelter guests was named Jim, and he loved to play cards. He later graduated to his own room and independence at the single room occupancy Woodstock Hotel in Times Square. Jim died some time later, clean-shaven and cared for, with FAPC members listed as his next of kin."

—Rev. Cress Darwin,
former FAPC Deacon and shelter volunteer.
The VOICE, June 1999

"As a volunteer we are given the opportunity to help these men on their journey—but be ready, the greater journey will be your own."

—Peter Saghir, former shelter volunteer.
The VOICE, January-February 2001

"None of the other shelters come within light years of FAPC, in terms of cleanliness, safety, and the welcoming attitude and supportiveness of the volunteer staff."

—Terence Mason, former shelter guest.
The VOICE, April 2006

moved to permanent space in the basement not far from where the current shelter is located. The new shelter had a large lounge, a sleeping area with lockers for 10 guests, and a room with two beds for the overnight volunteer hosts. As the program expanded, the church hired paid managers to supervise the nightly activities, counsel the men, and work with the organizations screening and finding permanent

Above: Images from the FAPC Archives show volunteers in 1986 preparing the original, six-bed shelter in what is now Jones Auditorium. Below: The current shelter, just below the ground floor of the church house, provides semi-private living quarters for 12 guests. Bottom: Lynn Wishart (standing) and Donald and Jeanne Pape talk with Franklin Capellan, a current shelter resident, about his hopes for permanent housing for himself and his family.

homes for the guests. The renovation of the church that took place in 2004—when the Christian Education Center was carved out of the bedrock under the Sanctuary—offered a golden opportunity for the church to modernize the shelter and build the warm, safe lodgings used today. The shelter now houses 12 men every night, 365 days a year.

The shelter is named for David B. Skinner, an FAPC Trustee and president of New York Hospital Cornell Medical Center prior to his death in 2003. Dr. Skinner joined the church in 1997 with his wife, Ellie. Their daughter, Margaret, was a frequent shelter host. Funding was provided by The Starr Foundation, who wanted to give a gift in honor of Dr. Skinner.

"The church's homeless program has come a long way since 1985," says Donald Pape, who with his wife, Jeanne, were the first coordinators for the basement shelter. "What is disappointing is that the homeless problem in New York City has gotten worse rather than better. Fortunately, the church continues to minister to the homeless, relying on hundreds of dedicated members who have volunteered the time and energy needed to make the shelter successful during the past 25 years."

"Sheltering 12 men for 365 nights a year is a substantial commitment for a largely volunteer hosting program," says Lynn Wishart, an FAPC Elder who is the current coordinator for the shelter. "We are always looking for more shelter hosts who can help people feel welcome by offering a safe place to sleep and some fellowship. Hopefully, others within the congregation can be challenged to actively support FAPC's long-term goal of increasing low-income permanent and supportive housing in Manhattan."

DETAILS

FAPC will host a luncheon and fellowship event honoring the 25th anniversary of the David B. Skinner Shelter at 12:30 pm Sunday, Sept. 25, in Jones Auditorium. Please RSVP by Sept. 19 to homelessevents@fapc.org. Volunteers interested in serving as shelter hosts may contact Joe Vedella (917.297.8940, jvedella@fapc.org) or Lynn Wishart (shelterhosts@fapc.org). Training is provided, along with private sleeping quarters.

John Crane is a member of the Board of Trustees and a frequent contributor to The VOICE.



INSPIRED FROM WITHIN

Beginning Sunday, Sept. 18, the Arts and Our Faith Committee presents *Inspired from Within*, an exhibition of art and photography by members of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. The exhibition will be on view in the Gallery through Thanksgiving.

"We have some very accomplished artists in our midst, and we wanted to showcase their talents," says Nancy Moore, who chairs

Arts and Our Faith and curated the exhibition with committee members Ron Cruikshank, Becky Hession and Ken Mulligan. "We were very pleased with the diversity of works that were submitted. Some are beautiful depictions of our building, while others are deeply personal expressions of the artists' spiritual lives."

Inspired from Within features the work of 11 artists. Three of them talk about their work below.



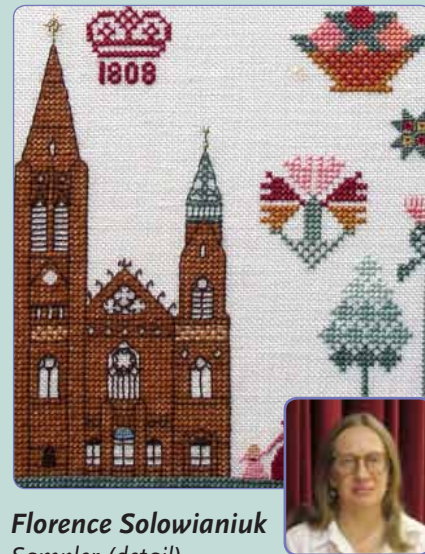
Christian Bailey
Freedom of Worship

Freedom of Worship is a collage constructed in 2003 with acrylic, pencil and a photo of the back end of a New York City tow truck, mounted inside the pages of a used book. It is part of a series of collages inspired by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Four Freedoms. I enjoy finding used, hardbound books for adaptive reuse purposes. One afternoon I found this book about the Four Freedoms and attempted to connect them with everyday objects one observes while walking around the city or on a train. Recently our young boys asked, "Where does God live?" I told them God made everything we see, so God must be everywhere. When I see an NYC tow truck on the street, I see a cross.



Neca Parker
The Thankful Poor

This acrylic painting is my interpretation of an 1894 piece by Henry Ossawa Tanner. It portrays a father and son seated at a set dinner table, praying over bare plates. I painted this in 1998; I was only 14 years old at the time. I was first attracted to this piece because it serves as a daily reminder to be thankful for every blessing, in both good times and bad. Communion is not just about the items on a table, but the loved ones whom we share it with. I took up art as a hobby when I was younger. I stayed after school to paint with my art teacher twice a week. We listened to classical music and just painted into the early hours of evening. It was a retreat for me, and even today art remains a sacred place. Painting allows me to see the beauty in so many things. Whether attempting to capture the smile in a mother's eye, the soft petals of a flower, or the brow lines on a forehead during prayer, art to me is so very spiritual. The beauty of art is less about technique and more about capturing the wonders of God's creation.



Florence Solowianiuk
Sampler (detail)

Both of my submissions for the art exhibition are in a technique known as counted cross stitch. The larger sampler is an original design based on Scottish samplers from the late 1700s—early 1800s (reflecting the church's Scottish roots). The strawberry border and undulating floral band are typical of these samplers, as are the peacocks and diamond trees. Familial initials with crowns above them are also a usual feature, which allowed me to include the initials of FAPC's senior pastors, in chronological order from John B. Romeyn through Scott Black Johnston. I charted a reasonable facsimile of the church, including the unusual checkerboard pattern in the exterior stoneworks. My needlework adventures began with crochet in grade school. Having been raised Catholic, I was naturally fascinated by the beautiful vestments and altar linens I saw as a child, and that fed an interest in religious needlework.

GUATEMALA, WHERE I BELONG



NEXT volunteers at work near Antigua, Guatemala, in July (above). Lisa Tilson, second from right, with fellow volunteers Graciela Rodriguez, Abby Laughery and Merideth Hite (upper right). A trio of Guatemalans served by Engadi Ministries (lower right).



In July, for the second consecutive year, nine volunteers from *NEXT* Ministries spent a week helping Engadi Ministries build a refuge for at-risk youth in Guatemala. For volunteer Lisa Tilson, these two mission trips have been a journey of self-discovery. She tells her story here. For more on Engadi Ministries, visit engadiministries.org.

By Lisa Tilson

Before I went to Guatemala in 2010, my life was spinning. Friends were coming in and out of my life, professional advancements were a constant rollercoaster, and my faith only seemed to exist during the hour I sat in church. Feeling called to make a change, I signed up for the *NEXT* Ministries mission trip and spent a week digging the foundation of what is now the first building on the Engadi Ministries' refuge in Antigua, Guatemala.

I dug the trench with a group of eight people I'd never met, for a ministry I knew little about before arriving in Guatemala. And it changed my life.

In Zone 18 of Guatemala City, the average male is in a gang by age 13. Gang members are involved in drug dealing, extortion and gang rape, creating a cycle of violence and poverty that has plagued their community for years. Nathan Hardeman, founder of Engadi Ministries Intl., is building a refuge where these would-be gang members can grow into respectful, educated and responsible men.

At the end of the trip in 2010, it was clear to me that God's plan extended past my stay in Guatemala. I told Nathan to use me however he could, and made a promise to be more involved at church. During the year, I found renewed purpose for my professional strengths by helping Nathan launch a website, design a logo and create fundraising materials for Engadi.

I returned with *NEXT* Ministries this past July as a co-chair for missions on *NEXT*'s leadership team. Our group of nine mixed and poured cement, carried buckets, pushed wheelbarrows, leveled out large plots of a hillside with shovels and pick axes, and most importantly, played, prayed and connected with the community the refuge will eventually serve.

Seeing the property in progress is both inspiring and overwhelming. There is still so much work to be done. But even though the walls are not up, roofs are not on and the doors are not open, the refuge is already serving Engadi's mission. Engadi became the catalyst for change I needed in my life. It renewed my faith, inspired me to realign my goals and connected me with a church group I now call family.

While I hope to see the day Nathan welcomes those boys to the refuge we helped to build, it's already transforming the lives of people in Guatemala City, volunteers from churches across the U.S. ... and a 20-something *NEXTer* hoping to find her humble place in the world.

September

- 11 **9/11 + 10: A Service of Prayer, Reflection and Sacred Music.** 8:30 –11 am, Sanctuary.
Memory, Challenge and Hope: An Interfaith Service Marking the 10th Anniversary of 9/11. 12:30 pm, Sanctuary.
- 18 **Homecoming Sunday.** The Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston begins a 10-week sermon series, "Dancing in the Spirit." 9:30 am, Kirkland Chapel; 11 am, Sanctuary.
Opportunities Fair. The annual festival celebrating the diverse programs and ministries of FAPC. Following each worship service, in Bonnell Hall.
Inspired from Within: A Members' Exhibit. Exhibition of art and photography by members of FAPC, sponsored by the Arts and Our Faith Committee. The Gallery, through Nov. 27.
- 24 **Parents Night Out.** 3:30 pm, Christian Education Center.
- 25 **What We Believe.** This first session of the new members' class kicks off Adult Education's fall term. 12:15 pm, Boardroom.
25th Anniversary of the Shelter. Luncheon and fellowship event honoring those who created the FAPC men's shelter and the volunteers who keep it running. 12:30 pm, Jones Auditorium. Please RSVP by Sept. 19 to homelessevents@fapc.org.
Focus of NEXT Kick-off. The young adult weekly discussion group returns. 12:30 pm, Corning Logan Room.
Bowery Mission. Worship service and dinner led by FAPC volunteers. 5:45 pm, 227 Bowery, between Prince and Rivington Streets on the Lower East Side.

FALL @FAPC



Coming This Fall

OCTOBER

- 2 **Make a Joyful Noise.** The 2012 Pledge Campaign begins. 9:30 am, Kirkland Chapel; 11 am, Sanctuary.
Ordination and Installation. Charlene Han Powell becomes a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and is installed as Associate Pastor for Christian Education. 3 pm, Sanctuary.
- 4 **The Service Dinner.** A new fellowship event to recognize those who have served as officers at FAPC. Details to come.
- 14-16 **NEXT Ministries Fall Retreat.** Details to come. Contact: nextministries@fapc.org.
- 16 **Responding to the Needs of Africa's Children.** A special Adult Education presentation on mission projects supported by FAPC, from Presbyterian missionaries Nancy and Frank Dimmock. 12:30 pm, Jones Auditorium.
- 23 **Legacy Association Luncheon.** Annual recognition event for all who have remembered FAPC in their planned giving. 12:30 pm, Corning Logan Room.
- 29 **Family Ministries Fall Festival.** 10 am, Christian Education Center.
- 30 **Pledge Sunday.** 9:30 am, Kirkland Chapel; 11 am, Sanctuary.
Installation Service. The Rev. Kate Dunn is installed as Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Outreach. 3 pm, Sanctuary.

NOVEMBER

- 1 **Feed Your Soul.** The annual event hosted by the Outreach Committee. Dinner at 5:30 pm, Bonnell Hall. Communion service at 7 pm, Kirkland Chapel.
- 4-5 **Joy of Christmas Bazaar.** The annual extravaganza hosted by the Women's Association, benefiting the organization's benevolence program. 10 am–5 pm (Friday) and 10 am–4 pm (Saturday), Christian Education Center.
- 13 **Christmas Angel Tree Project.** Our yearly collection of Christmas presents for children of incarcerated parents, sponsored by the Deacons Service Committee. Through Dec. 4.
- 27 **First Sunday of Advent.**



The VOICE is published 10 times a year for members and friends of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.
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