

SHENKEL HAPPENINGS – JUNE 2026

Greetings, Shenkel Friends and Family!

My friend and I met to walk the loop behind Fork & Ale the other day. It's a 1.7 mile gravel path through lush woods and singing birds, where the smell of honeysuckle is soothing and takes me back to my childhood. It's a place that can be centering and invigorating, in line with all the online urging to immerse ourselves in nature to support our physical and mental health.

As we readied to hit the trail, another friend approached us at the end of her walk. With amazement and enthusiasm, she recounted her sightings of not one but two male Baltimore Orioles, something she's never seen before. Not being up on my birds unless they are very distinctive and visit my winter birdfeeder—think cardinals, red-winged blackbirds—she showed us a picture of a brilliant orange bird. Now this is one feathered friend that should really stand out if you're looking for it in the dense canopy of leaves and branches!

As we bid our good-byes, my friend and I set out on our walk, hoping to catch sight of at least one Baltimore Oriole. Deep in conversation, we glanced at the treetops and along the edges of the path now and then. Not seeing what we were expecting to see—after all, our friend saw two of these beauties—we fairly quickly gave up the search and instead took in the sights and sounds of what was right before us. The walk satisfied our immediate needs for exercise, fresh air, and companionship, but it sure would've been nice to see that bird!

That walk got me thinking about God. I think we are all evolved enough to know that God is not the old white guy with a long white beard sitting on a throne in the sky. That's the God of our childhoods, where religious folks tried to take something so indescribable (God) and create a concrete image that is more relatable. The God image on the throne became the Judge, invented to control the behavior of the masses and create the ingroup/outgroup mentality. It's sad to say, but it's not an uncommon message being put out by those churches that want to tell us that you have to be white, straight, married, and "saved" to be part of the ingroup. And, you know, the men should be obeyed. That's one of the rules. Because it's in the Bible, you see. But so is the command not to eat shellfish and to get divorced, spousal abuse be damned. But I digress.

So, what about the rest of us Christians? How do we understand God? Is God like our elusive Baltimore Oriole? Radiant, a thing of beauty and love? Close, but not always seen unless we stop what we are doing and open our spiritual eyes and hearts to the loving presence that is always there? My understanding of God has evolved over the years. I agree with Richard Rohr (renowned theologian of today) that God is in us and around us. Neither male nor female, yet both and more. An always available source of love if we can let go of our thoughts, expectations, fears, and desires to access this Love.

Easier said than done, for sure. Letting go is never easy. It takes a lot of practice, but sitting quietly, paying attention to your breathing, and noticing then letting go of any thoughts that clamor for your attention is a good start. Open your spiritual eyes. Then let this ever-present Love into your entire being.

Now let's see what's happening at your church.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

There will be one outdoor service from now through September. Early services will resume when we move back inside.

FIRST OUTDOOR SERVICE

For all of us who have been eager to worship outside, that opportunity is finally here! Make your way to the Grove on **JUNE 14TH at 9:45 AM** and soak up the sights and sounds of nature as we "do church" outside in our beautiful grove. Bring a lawn chair or blanket (or use our backless benches) and let the centering beauty of God's creation enfold you. There's an added bonus this week: Kim Yocom, with the help of her brother-in-law, BJ Peterman, has been working hard on the remodeling of the pavilion which none of us has seen, and **the big reveal** is this day, too!

AND we have a real treat: A chance to **celebrate Marie Bade's 101st birthday!** She can't wait to see everyone, so join us for birthday cupcakes courtesy of Kim and Steve following the service. Drinks and other refreshments will be provided.

WALK AND PRAY - LABYRINTH WALK EACH SUNDAY FROM 9:00 AM to 9:30 AM

In an increasingly complex and troubling world, many of us are wondering what to do. One simple act is to walk the Shenkel labyrinth on Sunday mornings. Labyrinth walking combines prayer and action as you journey from the outside world to the peace pole at the center. It is literally taking a step toward God and toward peace and wholeness in the world. You are invited to walk the Labyrinth from 9 - 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Come as you are able, leave when you are ready. Pam McShane will be at the Labyrinth most weeks to guide those who are new to labyrinth walking. There's power in walking and praying together!

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- The third annual Pottstown Pridefest is on **July 18 from 1:00-5:00 in Shenkel's Grove!** This event is a celebration of love, authenticity, and the inherent beauty in all people. Food, games, crafts, vendors, music and entertainment are all part of the day. Hope you can join the fun!
- Our annual **Corn & Doggie Roast** is scheduled for **August 30**. Further details will be given as the date draws nearer.

CONSISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Jeff Luckenbach, a long-time Shenkel member, passed away last year and made a bequest to Shenkel in his will. Now that his estate is being finalized, Shenkel received \$9,535 as an unrestricted bequest. Consistory elected to honor Jeff and his memory by applying \$9,000 of the bequest to our Current Fund deficit, and the remaining amount to replace some of the trees we lost in our grove area.
- Watch for highway signs encouraging people to attend our outdoor worship in the grove!

LOCAL MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

- **MISSION FIRST**

Mission First, located on High Street in Pottstown does much more than fill holiday food boxes. They maintain a not-so-little food pantry on the street and keep it filled for those whose food budgets don't stretch far enough. They have a clothes closet, open M, T, W, F mornings providing clothing and hygiene products to those who need them. On Wednesday evenings, they serve a community meal. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, they provide space to Street Medicine for a health clinic. They also provide Baskets of Hope filled with linens, cleaning supplies, etc. for families moving from shelters into more stable housing. There's a lot going on! For detailed information, go to www.missionfirstpottstown.org.

How can you help this amazing outreach to neighbors who need help?

- Donate needed items. In-season clothes in good condition and hygiene products are always welcome. For items needed, check the website.
- Volunteer to help out. Needs vary from day to day, but are mostly Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. Drivers to pick up donated food are always needed. For more information, contact Sue Meloy at skmeloy52@gmail.com.

- **COMMUNITY MEAL**

Shenkel folks are caring individuals who want to help those in need. We yearn to make a difference but sometimes don't know where to start. Here is an opportunity to show you care: The **4th Monday of each month**, a handful of our members help serve a **Community Lunch at Christ Episcopal in Pottstown**. Our church is an active participant in this local mission. Pastor Suzanne brings 70 salty and sweet snacks that are given out at lunch. These are purchased at Giant using the Giant gift cards that we also sell at church. These caring volunteers would love to welcome more helpers! You can serve lunch from 11:30-1:00, and/or go earlier to help sort food donations and prepare dessert trays. Don't worry—Shenkel is not responsible for the meal as we were

years ago. We are simply willing helpers who are there to do whatever tasks need to be done.

PROPERTY –

- Many, many thanks to Kim Yocom and BJ Peterman for renovating the pavilion bathroom area as well as the pavilion. Kim has gone above and beyond and has spent countless hours getting rid of decades of accumulated junk (with help from her husband Barry—thanks Barry) and locating various cabinets and accessories to support her vision for the renovation. It's amazing! We were able to do this thanks to Lisa Yocom's \$10,000 bequest. Thank you again, Kim, for all you do to keep our property in good working order and well maintained! We could not function without you!
- A shout-out also to Barry and Sue Miller for power washing the cemetery headstones. It is such a gift to have Shenkel folks who see a need and take care of it! Thank you, Barry and Sue!
- I know there are others who give their time and quietly work in the background to fix things and beautify our church. Gary McDermit and Lynne Moyer are great examples. Thank you, Gary and Lynne! I'm sure I'm missing someone, so let me know who else we need to thank.

- Join us **Thursdays at 11:00 AM in the Social Hall** for Qigong, led by our amazing teacher, Salil Gutt. Qigong's gentle movements have been used for centuries to improve health, reduce stress, and keep us in the present moment. Please wear comfortable clothing. The suggested fee is \$12.00 per class payable by cash or check, but if that is prohibitive, pay what you are able. Adults only, please.

- Along with presenting interesting events to help people in the community know who we are, Stewardship is also tasked with coming up with fundraising ideas. If you know of anyone who needs a rental space for picnics, meetings, showers or birthday/anniversary parties, have them call the church office for information. Every little bit helps! And this has proven to be a very good moneymaker for our church.

- We're always looking for new ideas for our Speaker Series! Do you have a particular topic you'd like to explore? Know someone (community member, college professor, friend, to name a few) who could present a 1-to-2-hour program on a topic of interest? Please let anyone from Stewardship know your

thoughts: Chris Gray, Dan Jenkins, Julie Zachesky, Kim Yocom, Mo or Tom Gallant, or Brenda Berriker.

REQUEST FOR ALL FACEBOOK USERS

Stewardship is working hard to put together interesting and timely speaker series events, but we may not be getting the word out. So, if you are on Facebook, please follow Shenkel UCC and look for any posts on upcoming events that Julie Zachesky has so faithfully been creating and posting. Then share it on your own personal FB page. We need to reach as many people as we can, and this is an easy way for you to use social media to let people know about our events. BETTER YET: Personally invite your friends and neighbors—it works! Thank you for your help!

SHENKEL PRAYER GROUP

Enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and celebrate the Spirit of God moving among us as we pray together. The group meets at **10:00 AM on the first Monday** of the month. All are welcome to participate!

CHURCH SCHOOL

There will be no Church School during the summer months. See you in September!

CLUSTER NEEDS

JUNE: canned chicken and canned ham

JULY: cereal

YOCOM FAMILY LANDSCAPING FUND FOR THE GROVE

The times when volunteers were plentiful and eager to put their backs into taking care of our properties are long gone. This means we must pay for much of the work that needs to be done for upkeep and repairs. To address this need, the Yocom family has generously started a fund to pay for mowing and to maintain the grove and labyrinth. Please contribute as you are able!

GIANT AND REDNER'S GIFT CARDS

You're doing a great job! This is an easy way to raise money for our church. Purchase your cards Sunday mornings or in the Church Office Tuesday-Thursday, between 9:00 and 1:30. Thanks for doing your part!

ONLINE GIVING/QR CODE

It's easier than ever to catch up on your giving to support and sustain our church. Just go to www.shenkelucc.org, open up Online Giving, and choose where you want your donations to go. Simple! In addition, QR codes are in the pews and will be on the table in the grove for an easy, fast way of contributing. Thank you in advance for your continuing support of your church.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

This committee is tasked with supporting the Pastor as well as bringing to her any concerns of the congregation. Information discussed is confidential. Members are Dan Jenkins and Tootie Hine. Please feel free to discuss any joys or concerns you have with any member of this committee.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Barry Yocom	6/1/26
Gio Manetti	6/2/26
Margie Allen	6/7/26
Sharon Sabo	6/9/26
Dawn Yocom	6/13/26
Tootie Hine	6/14/26
Kim Bade	6/15/26
Elizabeth Carr	6/16/26
David Derman	6/16/26
Marie Bade	6/18/26
Amelia Snyder	6/22/26
Ken Bevan Jr.	6/25/26
William Keim Jr.	6/25/26
Dan Jenkins	6/29/26
Michael Foss	6/30/26

JUNE PRAYER LOTTERY

June 7

Marie Bade
Joyce Pashley
Judy Gergle
Steven and Kim Bade

June 14

Bob and Sherri Mocarski
David Derman
BJ Peterman
Tom and Lori Klein

June 21

Gary and Susan Stultz

Julianne Wanner

Heather Burhans Tran

Lori Skulski

June 28

Kathy Murphy

Sharon and John Sabo

Josh Palubinsky

Christian, Mari and Connor O'Drain

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Laura Golden	7/1/26
Lucas Gray	7/2/26
Susan Royer	7/5/26
Daniel Snyder	7/7/26
Erika Burhans Price	7/9/26
Stacey Keim	7/10/26
Linda Jonides	7/11/26
Laura Hauze	7/12/26
Leslie Hauze	7/12/26
Joel Sweinhart	7/12/26
Rebecca Major	7/13/26
Hannah Dyott	7/14/26
Jess Hartzell	7/18/26
Steve Mest	7/18/26
Lori Klein	7/20/26
Tully Meehan	7/21/26
Rachel Berriker	7/24/26
Julie Zachesky	7/24/26
Lucy Hartzell	7/25/26
Cody Moyer	7/26/26
Lucas Zachesky	7/27/26
Lindsay Hoff	7/28/26
Christian O'Drain	7/29/26

JULY PRAYER LOTTERY

July 5

Tom and Maureen Gallant

Tesia Craner

Ashlyn Augustine

Jesse Painter

July 12

James White

Barry Yocom

David Phillips

Gary McDermit

July 19

Scott Kutz

Donald Laverty

Rachel Berriker

Barbara Sweinhart

July 26

Doug and Margie Allen

Ron and Carol Pearson

Maryln Rohrbach

Tracy Dise

Enjoy your summer!

Your Shenkel Happenings Editor,

Brenda Berriker