

SHENKEL HAPPENINGS – JULY 2026

Greetings, Shenkel Friends and Family!

As I go about doing life, I am occasionally reminded that writing this blurb is coming up, so I pay attention to any life lessons that catch my attention. Well, it's Monday morning, and despite a long car trip to New Hampshire, a wonderful evening with friends at Longwood Gardens, and various forays into the community and beyond, I had nothing.

So, I checked the weather, saw that another heat wave was coming, gathered my tools, and reluctantly headed for the beds at the end of the driveway. The flower beds are large, with a good portion filled with liriopse. Originally, we packed it together for erosion and weed control. After 16 years of patches dying out, the weeds were everywhere, and the job was daunting. Ignoring the fact that my neck, knees and back were not going to thank me for what I was about to put them through, I got started.

As all gardeners know, it's important to get the root out so it doesn't grow back. It was going fairly well. I weeded a patch and moved on. Then I looked back over my work and saw that, oops, I had missed one. And then I saw I had missed a lot more than one. In my more perfectionistic days, I would've pulled out every single weed until the job was done. And I would've paid for it with aches and pains for a couple of days. So, this time, I decided to weed out the worst ones. The ones that bothered me the most because they were so visible. It felt good! And so, I had found my metaphor for life.

Think about your weeds that have taken root. Are you spending too much time on social media? Games? The news, online or on TV? Try asking yourself why. Are you bored? Procrastinating? Afraid to not be totally informed? I know I can feel awfully out of sorts when I spend too much time on devices, so I'm trying to minimize screen time. Not going cold turkey, just weeding out what is no longer serving me.

Or perhaps a dominant weed is your over-active brain? Do you tend to analyze conversations, situations, things that happened in your past? How is that working for you? Ruminating about things out of your control can cause sleepless nights and suck the joy and purpose right out of you. So, what to do?

I'm a big proponent of finding a quiet place, breathing deeply, tapping into the love that is always there, and handing it all over to God. And then paying attention to what God is telling you to do (or not to do), maybe through a helpful thought or someone saying exactly what you needed to hear. Maybe that's the answer to your prayer. And in the midst of that, if you're still not finding the peace you need, maybe God is nudging you to find a good therapist! There's no shame in that, and it can make all the difference!

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

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Join us in our beautiful, rustic worship area **SUNDAYS at 9:45 AM in the Grove.**
Please note: There will be one outdoor service from now through September. Early services will resume when we move back inside.

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!
- We have a surprise for you after church this Sunday, **JULY 19.** It's an **ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT ICE CREAM SOCIAL!** With the heat wave upon us, what better way to catch up with your Shenkel family and cool off with tasty bowl of ice cream! The cost is \$5.00 with all proceeds going to the Mission Fund.
- Many of our Shenkel folks support a Liberian school-age student through **GOD'S PRECIOUS CHILDREN**, a very important mission project, since these children must pay for their own schooling with extremely limited family resources. Join us on **AUGUST 16 at 9:45 AM** as Jackie Manbeck of GPC leads worship and updates us on the children's lives and the organization's successes and challenges. And consider sponsoring a child!
- Our annual **CORN & DOGGIE ROAST** is scheduled for **AUGUST 30.** Look for further details next month.
- Our **COMMUNITY WORSHIP SERVICE** is on **SEPTEMBER 6** this year! Music & Worship is meeting July 26 to plan the service. Hope you can be there!

CONSISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

Nothing to report this month.

FROM MUSIC AND WORSHIP

Now that we have launched outdoor summer worship, perhaps you've noticed some changes in our song book. The Music and Worship Committee is pleased to offer to Shenkel a revised and updated summer songbook. After about 9 months of prayer and consideration, we replaced some of our lesser-used songs with some new musical ideas that we hope will enhance worship. In addition to some of the Committee members (Tootie, Louise, Sandy, Lori, Dan W., Susan, and Pastor Suzane) we had a great crew who helped with the assembly project (Brian, Connie, Gary, Gloria and Pat). And our Office Administrator, Danielle, was instrumental, preparing many copies of all the new pages.

We've already heard from some folks who have found new favorites! Lift your voices in praise in Shenkel's Grove, and let us know what new musical discoveries speak to you.

LOCAL MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

- **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.

- **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.

STEWARDSHIP

- 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

JULY: Cereal

AUGUST: Instant potatoes

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.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

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

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Steven Bade	8/3/26
Ted Gray	8/4/26
Dan Wolgemuth	8/6/26
Maryln Rohrbach	8/8/26
Jim Bevan	8/10/26
Barbara Sweinhart	8/10/26
Elaine Bevan	8/12/26
Grace Major	8/12/26
Morgan Scharneck	8/16/26
Jennifer Dyott	8/17/26
Carol Pearson	8/18/26
Ashlyn Augustine	8/21/26
Kaya Skulski	8/27/26
Jeffrey Dyott	8/28/26
Lori Scharneck	8/28/26
Joyce Pashley	8/29/26
Noah Bradley	8/30/26
Christian Golden	8/31/26
Wayne Klein	8/31/26

AUGUST PRAYER LOTTERY

August 2
Peter and Adrianne Wanner
Stacia and Joe Bradley
Louise Hine
Kelly Strunk and Steve Mest

August 9
Betty Bortz
Mark Dushanko
Ken and Betsy Bevan
David Derman

August 16
Brian and Pam McShane
Clay Zachesky
Gary McDermit
Ashlyn Augustine

August 23
Scott Kutz
Judy Gergle
James White
Jim and Clair Faust

August 30
Joyce Pashley
Barbara Brown
Andrew, Linda, Lexi, Brandon, Aaron, Michael and AJ Foss
Dan Jenkins

Enjoy your summer!
Your Shenkel Happenings Editor,
Brenda Berriker