



Shenkel United Church of Christ

2021



SHENKEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1580 Shenkel Road
Pottstown, PA 19465

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 Spring Forward 1 Hour	1	2	3 Bible Study 7 pm	4	5	6
March 14						
7 Virtual service with Communion Sunday School 11:30 am—Zoom	8	9 Consistory 6:30 pm	10 Bible Study 7 pm	11 Music & Worship on Zoom at 7:30 pm	12	13
14 Virtual service Sunday School 11:30 am—Zoom	15	16	17 Bible Study 7 pm	18	19	20
21 Virtual service Sunday School 11:30 am—Zoom	22	23	24 Bible Study 7 pm	25	26	27
28 Virtual service Sunday School 11:30 am—Zoom	29	30	31 Bible Study 7 pm	 Preparing for Easter		

Shenkel United Church of Christ

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor
Rev. Suzanne Spaulding

Organist:
Susan Royer

Music Director
Dan Wolgemuth

Office Administrator:
Lisa Dice

Sexton:
Stacey Keim

COVENANTED MINISTER IN MISSION

Rev. Wanda D. Craner,
Gestalt Pastoral Care
Minister and Trainer
Gestalt Pastoral Care
Associates

CONSISTORY

President:
Randy Berriker

Vice President:
Sandy Rowe

Secretary:
Dan Jenkins

Treasurer:
Ken Bevan

Financial Secretary:
Joan Palubinsky

Elders:
Randy Berriker
Joan Palubinsky
Sandy Rowe

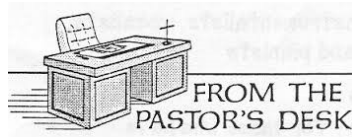
Deacons:
Dan Jenkins
Gary McDermitt
Pat Kuestner
Tony Gulotta

MINISTERS

All the members
of the church

1580 Shenkel Road, Pottstown PA 19465 610.326.3535

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As we approach the one year anniversary of the pandemic lockdown, it sort of feels like we've been on a Lenten journey for a year instead of 40 days! We've had to give up so much and we've had to figure out new ways to live and worship and reach out to family and friends. It has been a tough journey, especially when we can't see the end of this pandemic road. Thinking about this pandemic journey we've been on against our will, reminded me of other journeys and the things we learn as we travel.

In June 1989 when my then colleague, Faith, and I moved to Brazil we wore dresses on the plane and took 15 duffel-bags and 5 trunks of luggage with us. In August 2001 when we moved to China we wore comfortable clothes and each of us had one suitcase for luggage. I like to think that over the years we learned a few things about international travel and living. I hope that we learned to let go of some of our culturally acquired fear of not having what we need or want.

If we take enough journeys we learn what is important to take, what can be found along the way and what will just bog us down unnecessarily. During this whole month of March we are on a journey; a Lenten journey. It is a smaller journey within our greater faith journey which encompasses our entire life.

During the season of Lent each year we journey with Jesus toward the cross. During Holy Week we stay with Jesus and the disciples through the Last Supper and witness Jesus' betrayal, trial, and death. Finally on Easter Sunday we rejoice to hear the news that Jesus is risen from the dead and we know again, that God, in Jesus, has experienced the full range of human experience from birth through life even beyond death. We recall that we do not ever journey alone. God is accompanying us every step of the way.

As we consider journeys and the luggage we need or don't need to take on a journey, let us rejoice that on life's journey we never travel alone. We may have extra luggage, we may need to leave some things behind in order to move forward. We may find some important things along the way that we didn't know we would need. And we remember that we have a traveling companion in the Spirit of God who walks with us, encourages us, prays for us and guides us into all truth.

What is important for you to take with you on this year's Lenten journey?

What might you find along the way to aid you on this journey?

What is bogging you down this year during Lent? Are you willing and able to let it go?

May your Lenten journey be an adventure of learning and growing deeper in your faith,
Pastor Suzanne

February Consistory Highlights

- ♦ Shenkel is part of a 4-Way Covenant with Conference and Gestalt Pastoral Care. As part of the Covenant, we had accepted a financial commitment to GPC. Consistory voted to approve an amount from our Mission and Service Allocation each January to honor this commitment. In the event an Allocation is not available, a free-will offering will be taken. \$1,000 was approved from the Allocation for 2020 and \$1,000 was approved for 2021.
- ♦ We accepted with regret the resignation of Chris and Ted Gray as youth advisors effective at the end of the school term. We thank them for their tireless service to our youth. Please contact Randy Berriker if you have a suggestion for their replacements.
- ♦ The Nominating Committee has been activated and will be looking for candidates to fill two open Consistory and 2 open BOCE positions. All nominations must be in by March 31st.
- ♦ The guidelines for the William Burhans Scholarship have been finalized. The first consideration for the scholarship will be in 2022. Copies of the guidelines are available upon request through the church office.
- ♦ We are still looking for a member to volunteer to be a backup to the Cemetery Superintendent. If interested in learning more, please contact Randy Berriker.

Profile Committee

I'd like to update you about the progress we have been making in writing the Church Profile.

First, I'd like to thank everyone who has responded to our surveys. There will be more in our future, as well as Zoom meetings! While it's not the optimal way to gather information, during the pandemic it really is the only way. And it is very important that everyone participates so we get a true picture of who Shenkel is and where we would like to be in the future.

Just to recap, the Profile Committee is composed of Gary McDermit, Lori Scharneck, Dan Jenkins, and me. Pastor Suzanne also helps guide the process and gather information. The Church Profile is the very lengthy document that each church has been asked to put together, whether they are searching for a pastor or not. When churches are searching, this becomes the church's resume to let pastors know whether or not they would be a good fit for the congregation.

There are 3 sections to the Profile, and they are completed in this order: Who are we now? Who are our neighbors? Who is God calling us to become? Each section is an in depth look at our church, requiring gathering of information, figuring out what that information means, and then mostly writing narratives to explain the information. As of right now, we are basically finished with the Who Are We Now? section which is a large piece of the profile. We are just beginning to work on the Who are our Neighbors? section. The third part of the profile, Who is God Calling us to Become? will require congregational input, a sharing of ideas, and prayerful discernment.

Our committee has a sheet from the Conference written pre-pandemic that gives us pointers on how to gather information and discern our future. It involves small group meetings, potluck luncheons, and face-to-face exercises to tease out our vision for the future. Obviously, we will need to reinvent the wheel here unless COVID recommendations change!

So, I am asking you to please continue to respond to surveys sent to you and return them by the requested deadlines. If Zoom meetings are scheduled, please do everything you can to be a part of them. And please be in intentional prayer about this process. It is a very big undertaking, but we are absolutely up to the task of completing the process as soon as we can. While there are many factors that enter into how long it may take to complete the profile, I am hoping that we can finish this off by May or June.

Peace and blessings to you!

PROFILE COMMITTEE:

Brenda Berriker, Gary McDermit,

Lori Scharneck, Dan Jenkins



Jessica Moser	03/01
Karl Metka	03/02
Joan Granger	03/03
Faye Pedrick	03/04
Brenda Berriker	03/06
Patricia Laverty	03/06
Sela Chidawu	03/11
Thomas Klein	03/14
Steven Craner	03/15
Lynne Moyer	03/19
Lilly Keim	03/20
Cara Bevan	03/22
Ethel Miller	03/24
Stauffer Kutz	03/30
Stephanie Viti	03/30

During the month of March, Shenkel UCC will be praying for these randomly selected members and friends of our congregation:

- 3/7 Jess, Adam, Lucy and Jordan Hartzell
Carolyn Basely
Ann Few
Wanda and Steve Craner
Abby Dise
- 3/14 Laura and Christian Golden
Carole and Henry Bailey
Lynn, Dave and Katie Derman
Sharon, Dan, Malcolm and Amelia Snyder
Tracy Dise
- 3/21 Barb Burhans
Joan and Joe Palubinsky
Ron Christman
Sue and Gary Stultz
Gary McDermit
- 3/28 Robin and Mike Martin
Ruth Brewer
Lilly Keim
Lexi Foss
Dawn Yocom



Rebuilding refugee resettlement to make it better than it was under Trump—or Obama

“The last four years were incredibly hard. But we also know that the system was not perfect four years ago.”

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service president and CEO Krish O’Mara Vignarajah is a native of Sri Lanka who came to the United States as a nine-month-old refugee. She served in the Obama administration as a part of the First Lady’s Let Girls Learn initiative and coordinated refugee programs for the State Department. She joined LIRS as president in 2019. LIRS is one of nine private, mostly faith-based organizations that partner with the federal government to resettle refugees.

What have the last four years been like for a refugee resettlement agency?

Suffice it to say that the last four years have been a concerted effort to decimate the refugee resettlement system in the United States. We saw it first in the cuts to the refugee resettlement ceiling: setting a record low number became an annual tradition for the administration, ultimately leading to an 85 percent cut in refugee admissions.

We also saw this in the xenophobic bans that targeted and excluded Muslims at a time when the most dire global displacement crisis in history disproportionately impacted Muslim-majority countries.

We also saw the issuing of an executive order that gave states and localities the authority to opt out of refugee resettlement. This essentially amounted to an invitation from the White House for politicians to play politics with some of the most vulnerable children and families in the world. That is why LIRS, along with other resettlement agencies, sued the administration and won an injunction against this order.

The last four years were incredibly hard. But we also know that the system was not perfect four years ago. Our hope is that we will rebuild a better system.

What are some of the immediate things the new administration can do?

President Biden has proposed a task force focused on family reunification as an urgent priority. He has been explicit in his commitment to returning the refugee resettlement number to 125,000.

Some things are easy to reverse, like the Muslim ban and stopping construction along the border wall. But there are other things that are more difficult. For example, it is going to be a little more complicated to get the border situation straightened out. I think they are trying right now to assess what the infrastructure is and to get the protocols in place.

How do we improve refugee resettlement in the US?

I would highlight three changes to the refugee resettlement structure.

Given the unprecedented number of displaced people worldwide, we should consider an annual admissions refugee floor—not just a ceiling. This idea was included in a House bill called the GRACE Act, which would set a minimum of 95,000 refugees per fiscal year. That number represents the historic average since the beginning of the program in 1980, if you average across all administrations before this last one.

This would help insulate the program from the political winds, and it would protect refugees from becoming the victims of political cudgels. This is not an abstract concern. The politicization of this program is completely unnecessary. People don’t realize that we have resettled more refugees under Republican administrations than under Democratic ones. President Reagan resettled the highest number

of refugees.

Second, we can do an even better job of community cosponsorship of refugees. Canada took an idea that we initially piloted and ran with it, and it is interesting to see just how robust a program it has become there. We can do better in our work to cosponsor with churches and community groups to support new refugees—and in that way create shared responsibility for helping families and individuals integrate into the community, develop language skills, find employment. There are so many communities and congregations that are enthusiastic about this work.

The final thing I would highlight is the devastating effects of the climate crisis, leading to more refugees worldwide. We are already seeing it here off the coast of Louisiana and in places like Shishmaref, Alaska, where communities are forced to flee because the land where they live will no longer exist. As of right now, there is no legal or policy framework that even recognizes the concept of a climate refugee. Last year Senator Markey introduced a bill to open up 50,000 slots for climate refugees. In other words, he suggested creating a separate allocation for people displaced by climate change. This isn't something that we get de-cades to plan for. It is a reality we face today.

What does LIRS's work look like on the US-Mexico border?

Before asylum seekers were denied access to the United States, our border program provided shelter and resources using churches and community-based organizations. It was a beautiful program. This was an effort that drew volunteers and resources from all across the country.

When my family fled Sri Lanka, it was on the brink of civil war, divided along religious lines. So to me, the idea of a country where you have Lutherans working alongside Episcopalians working alongside Catholics working alongside Jews working alongside those who may not have a faith is deeply moving. That ecumenical response is such a core part of who we are as a country, a country that feels moved to welcome the stranger.

There are tens of thousands of people camped at the US border in an unsustainable situation. There are children who are being rejected at the border in violation of US and international law. When you hear officials say things like, "We don't have the capacity to accept children," that simply isn't true. We at LIRS have the infrastructure to accept both children and families into our alternatives to detention programs. When it comes to unaccompanied minors, we have unique expertise in this area. We are one of only two agencies that resettles unaccompanied minors, and we have a long history of taking them into our care and shepherding them through a complex system. Our hope is that we can start rebuilding this infrastructure now.

We've successfully piloted several programs that have shown near perfect compliance with all immigration requirements and enforcement. We've found community-based resources for families, and we've done it at a fraction of the cost of detention.

Tell us more about your alternatives to detention programs.

I feel so deeply about how broken our detention system is. We have over 50,000 people in immigration detention centers held at any one time. The tragedy with the pandemic is that parents are being faced with an impossible choice: keep a child in their own care, but incarcerated, while COVID remains a danger in those settings, or release a child into who knows whose custody with who knows what care. There is a viable alternative that is not exercised enough: release the entire family into a program like alternatives to detention.

It is a tragedy that private prison companies that were pushed out of the domestic penitentiary system

because of criminal justice reform looked to immigration as the new profit center. It is not surprising, the dynamics and trends that we are seeing: private prison companies operate about 80 percent of the beds in the immigration system. CoreCivic and the GEO Group, the top two, made \$1.7 billion last year in contracts. Equally horrifying to me is that companies like Halliburton are profiteering off of the well-being of children in places like Homestead in Florida, basically a warehouse for children. This is reprehensible.

When I visited Homestead, they had 144 children sleeping in one room, and they claimed that the kids like it because it is like a slumber party. When they said that, it felt like a preemptive statement because they saw our horror.

But these private prison companies are savvy. They have also gotten into the market of “alternatives to detention.” I am not against them moving away from detention, but what concerns me is that there is not the kind of commitment that a faith-based nonprofit has that is not trying to make money off of people’s suffering.

Our goal is to provide alternatives that put people first. For adults this means community-based support which we’ve shown to be successful. For children our alternative is transitional foster care. We can provide a loving home for the period of time that it is going to take them to reunify with their sponsors. We provide the comfort and care that children need after what has usually been a traumatic journey and significant trauma in their home country. Sadly, we still have a system that does not prioritize smaller settings and faith-based nonprofits. Yes, it takes a little more work than putting a child in a warehouse, but it is obviously worth it. That’s our calling.

What is your message to faith communities about the future of refugee resettlement?

There is going to be such an exciting ramp-up of our work of welcome. To maximize our ability to serve, we are actively looking to our congregations, pastors, and community-based groups to partner with us. We are returning to our legacy of welcoming the stranger. It is not something that one organization can do alone, but I am so hopeful because there is such openness in these communities to embracing the most vulnerable who seek refuge here.

Reprinted from *The Christian Century*

Giant and Redner’s Gift Cards

Giant gift cards in \$25, \$50 or \$100 increments and Redner’s gift cards in \$50 and \$100 increments can be purchased in the church office on Tuesdays, Wednesday or Thursdays from 9 am to 2 pm.



Holy Communion

Shenkel UCC celebrates the sacrament of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month.



As of January 31, 2021	Current Fund	
ACTUAL	Month	YTD
Opening Bal.	6,546	6,546
Giving	10,901	10,901
Expenses	(14,829)	(14,829)
Subtotal	2,617	2,618
Rent Income	1,700	20,400
Other	1	1
Ending Balance	4,318	4,318
Net Chg	(2,228)	(2,228)
BUDGET		
Giving	14,591	14,591
Over (Under)	(3,690)	(3,690)



Our Church's Wider Mission		
January 31, 2021	Month	YTD
Actual	380.00	380.00
Budget	1,000.00	1,000.00
Over (under)	(620.00)	(620.00)