



## *A Message from Pastor Becca*

The 2020 Olympics are upon us, finally. Of course, like everything else in 2021, it doesn't quite look like we are used to. There are no arenas full of spectators, there is constant news of athletes testing positive crushing their long sought Olympic dreams, and there are masks everywhere. This pandemic is ever present, rearing its stubborn head, reminding us that we aren't quite out of the woods yet. As I write this, I am watching women's gymnastics. I already know who placed because the time difference and technology have alerted me to the medal winners. Yet for as long as I can remember I have watched women's gymnastics in pure awe, this evening is no different. Tonight, however there are a lot of cutaway shots of Simone Biles, who is not competing, she stepped back to care for herself. While some people were critical of her decision and name calling ensued, I applaud her and celebrate her bravery. It is not an easy thing to step back when you have worked your entire life toward something. I add my voice to the chorus of those supporting her.

I was reminded of the 1996 Olympics, the year Kerri Strug broke her ankle and continued in the competition anyway. The magnificent seven went on to win the first ever team gold for the USA. (This was also the year a gymnast from the Ukraine won the gold in the women's all around, Lilia Podkopyayeva. Her first name might seem familiar.) I was reminded of Kerri's story reading a post on social media from a father who showed his daughters the video of that moment. They asked him why she kept going if she was hurt. He reflected on the difference between Kerri's story and Simone's story. We have been conditioned to celebrate the people who push through their pain often suffering more severe injuries. On the flip side we have been conditioned to question an elite athlete who says I can't do this today, she needed to rest. I fully support both women in the choices they made regarding competition, but I question what we value as a culture and if aligns with the life of faith we are called to.

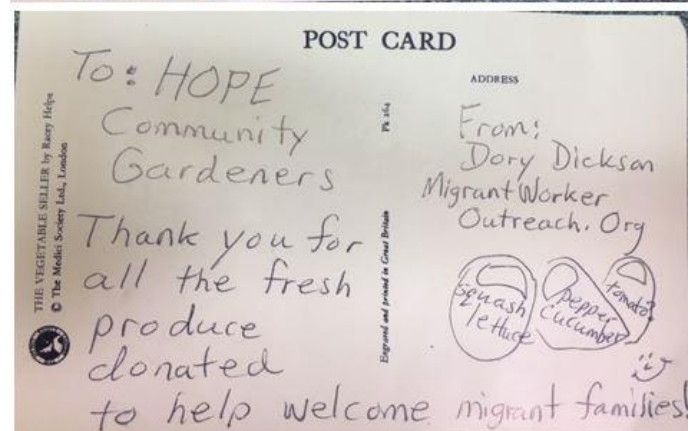
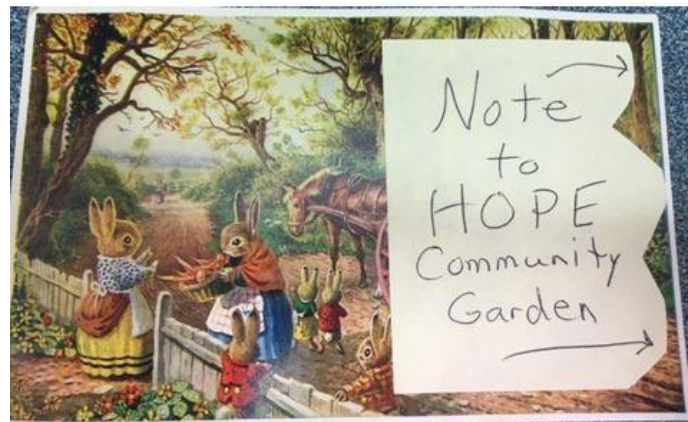
I grew up in a world that encouraged me to work through the pain, push harder, don't fail, perform, the goal is excellence. I have done it, even exceedingly well at times. Now I find that in a world that values pushing through the pain, I am learning to slow down and honor where I am at. Recently my daughter said to me, "Mom you are like a rabbit you hide your pain to not appear like weakened prey." I wondered what I was teaching her, I would never want her to hide her pain or exhaustion. Yet I am somehow terrible at doing this myself and sometimes I am exhausted. I found myself this week saying I am tired, then instead of pushing through my to do list, I went to bed early. I rested. I was better for it.

It is hard to rest and yet it is so important that after creating the world God rested! Jesus took a nap on a boat and was sleeping so soundly he slept through a storm. Sabbath is one of the commandments! Rest helps our bodies, minds, and souls so that we can be better people, better at being the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. As we continue to watch the Olympic coverage, may we come together in camaraderie with the whole world, celebrate incredible achievements, and honor each other enough to know the value of rest. Rest for athletes. Rest for tired parents. Rest for students. Rest for artists. Rest for those exhausted by a pandemic. Rest for those who had a rough day. Rest for every one of us.



## HOPE Garden Mid-Summer 2021 Update!

It has been an excellent growing season, with weekly harvests and donations (about 942 pounds so far!) going to St. Vincent food pantries in Medford and Tabernacle, as well as to the Migrant Worker Organization. Thanks to ALL who continue to plant, harvest, weed, water and care for this wonderful mission outreach! If you are interested in helping out, please contact Mary C. for more information.



## Need A Puzzle? Pick One Up at Church!

There are MANY puzzles available in the closet near the loft stairs. There are also books for your summer reading pleasure. Please stop by to browse the selection and take a few!



## August 2021 Session Summary

At the June Session meeting, Session discussed the recent installation of Jonathan Cohill as the Moderator-Elect of the Presbytery for Southern New Jersey. Session also reviewed the new Reopening Guidelines for our sanctuary and our church building. The Reopening Committee will continue to review these guidelines as needed. Finally, Session voted to take a break from formally meeting in July and August 2021. The Session By-laws now allow them to meet virtually to address any issue that might be needed.

Dr. Ginny Magnus  
Clerk of Session

## Moment for Mission

Due to the ongoing financial support for missions here at Faith Church, we have been able to assist with several worthy and long-term projects.

- ✓ Sister Jean's Pantry in Atlantic City was distributing food boxes during the pandemic and is now moving toward reestablishing an in-person feeding program as they move into newly renovated spaces. We were able to make a spring donation and plan to do so again in the fall.
- ✓ We supported the Urban Promise Summer School & Camp in Camden which is desperately trying to help students make up for lost educational progress in 2020 and also offer some "fun" time via Camp to rejuvenate kids for the new school year.
- ✓ A new family made up of a single dad and 3 children was identified for needed help via My Brother's Keeper. We were able to donate to get them started and hope to have a back to school supply collection for the children.
- ✓ And then there was the dire outdoor work needed on the Christian Caring Center building which we partnered with multiple churches on and which is almost completed.

Your donations via the **bimonthly green mission envelopes** and the Christmas Mission Offering help us to reach many needy people and support worthy causes. Your Mission Committee thanks you!

*For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever.*

- Psalm 9:18

Lorraine Kunkle, Mission Elder



## Deacon Food Pantry News

Please note the new way that deacons will be collecting for the food pantry!

- We will be collecting items only on the first Sunday of each month.
- Each month we will request specific items for donation.
- There will be a bin placed by the entrance from the parking lot for the items to be dropped off on your way in.

**September:** breakfast foods (such as cereal, oatmeal, pancake mix, syrup, juice)

**October:** canned vegetables and fruits

**November:** Thanksgiving items (such as stuffing mix, gravy, instant potatoes, pumpkin, cranberry sauce).

We will be donating to local food banks, Christian Caring Center, and Extended Hand Ministry as we no longer distribute to individual families.



**Feeding the Community**

## Gracemeals Update

Gracemeals With Faith is in full swing making salads each Wednesday morning. 50 salads with protein bars are taken to the Christian Caring Center and will continue through the end of September.

This fresh and healthy meal is delivered by the CCC to the homeless in Pemberton. This includes families housed in motels.

**You can help!** We need drivers to deliver the salads. You'll be contacted when the salads are almost ready (between 10 and 11:30 am). Once they're loaded, you drive to the CCC in Brown's Mills where volunteers unload them and you're off! Contact Joan Z. to volunteer.





A beautiful photo of the plums growing in the HOPE Garden. Thanks, Sandy G!



Salads with dressing, fork and protein bars. Did you know our containers and forks are biodegradable? They're made from sugar cane. Thanks to Lorraine for the photo!



# INFO@FAITH

July/August 2019

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## Current Elders

Mary Currie  
Linda Hamilton  
John Heald  
Lorraine Kunkle  
Virginia Magnus

## Current Deacons

Betty Ann Beck  
Paige Caracuzzo  
Bob Casey  
Rob Galberg  
Joyce Schreiner