



# MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT

June 2024



First Presbyterian Church of Ambler  
4 S Ridge Ave., Ambler PA 19002 [fpcambler.org](http://fpcambler.org)

## Embracing Care and Compassion: Launching Stephen Ministry at FPCA

Jenn Vincent,  
Stephen Ministry Leader

I was first introduced to Stephen Ministry about 18 years ago. Our community was suffering from a tragedy. In response my previous church decided to start Stephen Ministry, and I was immediately intrigued. I spent time in prayer as I understood that the ministry was a commitment. The commitment is 50 hours/20 weeks of training, an hour a week meeting with a care receiver and monthly supervision with continuing education meetings. The Lord encouraged me to use my gifts to serve in this way.



Stephen Ministry Leaders:  
Jenn Vincent (left) and Linda Bishop (right)

I started comprehensive training. I felt excited each week when we met to learn, practice skills and grow as a group. The weeks went quickly, and I became confident that I was called to serve others as a Stephen Minister. As a human one of my first responses was how will I know that I am helping someone. However, I quickly learned and relied on the fact that God was the one and only cure giver. I am honored to walk along side someone that is hurting and witness how the Lord loves and comforts them.

As I served as a Stephen Minister my faith grew. My care receivers changed my life as I helped change theirs. The blessings of being a conduit for God's love and watching Him work is awesome. Personally, I have been faced with several heartbreaking experiences. My training as a Stephen Minister not only showed me that God held me tight and was my healer, but I was able to walk along with other family members.

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## STEPHEN MINISTRY (continued)

Shortly after I became a member of FPCA a conversation began regarding bringing the ministry here. Once again, the Lord enlightened me to the need for sharing His compassion and love. Unfortunately, God said, not yet. During the years in between vision and now I received several nudges. I continued to log on to Stephen Ministries to see what was new and read several resource books. The ministry continued to be mentioned in a few meetings and gatherings during this time. Finally, God's nudge was so strong that it was placed on my heart to take the next step. After inquiring with Pastor Ryan Balsan and Debi Ferrarello, Director of Discipleship, their response was an overwhelming Yes!

This began the process of bringing the ministry to FPCA. Soon after I received the response I reached out to Linda Bishop, and she had been looking into the ministry herself. Another God nudge, I think so. Perhaps she can share her story with you sometime. Together we approached the deacons and requested their prayerful and financial support. Once that was received Linda and I took Stephen Leader training. Now here we are searching for congregational members to train and serve as Stephen Ministers. ✨

My passion for this ministry is incredible. I believe that there are many people that would be blessed from serving as a Stephen Minister as well as receiving care from one. ✨

We are not here to solve the hurt. God is the cure giver.

However, it is said in Galatians 6:2 that we are called to

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ."

I am available if anyone would like to learn more about my experience or more about Stephen Ministry. Please join me in praying for the ministry.

[stephenministry@fpcambler.org](mailto:stephenministry@fpcambler.org)



**STEPHEN  
MINISTRY**

**A Christ-centered ministry to provide confidential  
one-to-one emotional and spiritual care  
to adults who are hurting.**

Contact Linda Bishop or Jenn Vincent for more information  
[stephenministry@fpcambler.org](mailto:stephenministry@fpcambler.org)





## SEEDS OF JOY school year ends ... Two Terrific Weeks of Summer Camp

Teresa Nolin,  
Director, Seeds of Joy

Seeds of Joy (SOJ) ended their school year with a family picnic and celebration of our Trees (Pre-K class) on Thursday, May 23rd. We “graduated” some of the first students who first attended SOJ in 2021. Seven of our Pre-K students were members of our first 2-year-old class, taught by Mrs. Teresa Nolin and Mrs. Tara Brown. It has been such a pleasure to see them grow and learn in our classrooms. We celebrated 13 students as they leave our school and journey to kindergarten. We will miss them but are confident they will be successful in their new schools! After our ceremony, we had our family picnic in Fellowship Hall due to the weather. FPCA’s own, Judy Tudy, captivated the families with a wonderful magic show! We enjoyed some snacks together and said “so long” until September.





## Seeds of Joy (continued)

### SUMMER CAMP 2024!

On Monday, June 7th we welcomed sixteen 4-and-5-year-olds to our first full week of summer camp. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, we enjoyed the addition of ten 2-year-olds and twenty-four 3-year-olds. The outside areas of the church including the playground, memorial garden and the side yard were used to provide outdoor play experiences and fun for over 45 children!

The first week was ALL about water! We explored water in all its forms including bubbles, ice and salt water. Ms. Debi (Ferrarello) taught us in chapel that water is a gift from God that we all need. It keeps us healthy, safe and germ-free! She showed us how germs are spread from hand to hand using lotion and glitte -r plus how when you add soap to a bowl of water and glitter (represents the germs) it pushes the glitter away! Just like when we wash our hands with soap and water; it pushes the germs away!







# YOUTH PUT THEIR FAITH TO WORK IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Taylor Miksch

Our youth group traveled to Pittsburgh, PA, June 15–21 in collaboration with Praying Pelican Missions. Our mission work included helping out the Cornerstone Church and other local organizations with cleaning and beautifying, working with Tree Pittsburgh, and helping to deliver food to those in need. I will be recalling our productive, fun, and transformative week.



Students: Anna Kolpakova, Bennett Falcone, Charlotte Marlowe, Christine Aemisegger, Genevieve Gajan, Jonnie Klinger, Lily Smalbach, Maia McClure, Natalie Schultz, Shaun Palmer, Taylor Miksch  
Leaders: Breanna Grant, Jean Miksch, Ashley Dilenno, Drew Gajan



We began with a five hour drive and most of our time was spent conversing, listening to music, or sleeping. Upon arriving, the guys and girls separated into their respective rooms to set up their stuff before we all went downstairs to play different card and tabletop games – which would become a frequent occurrence toward the end of each day.

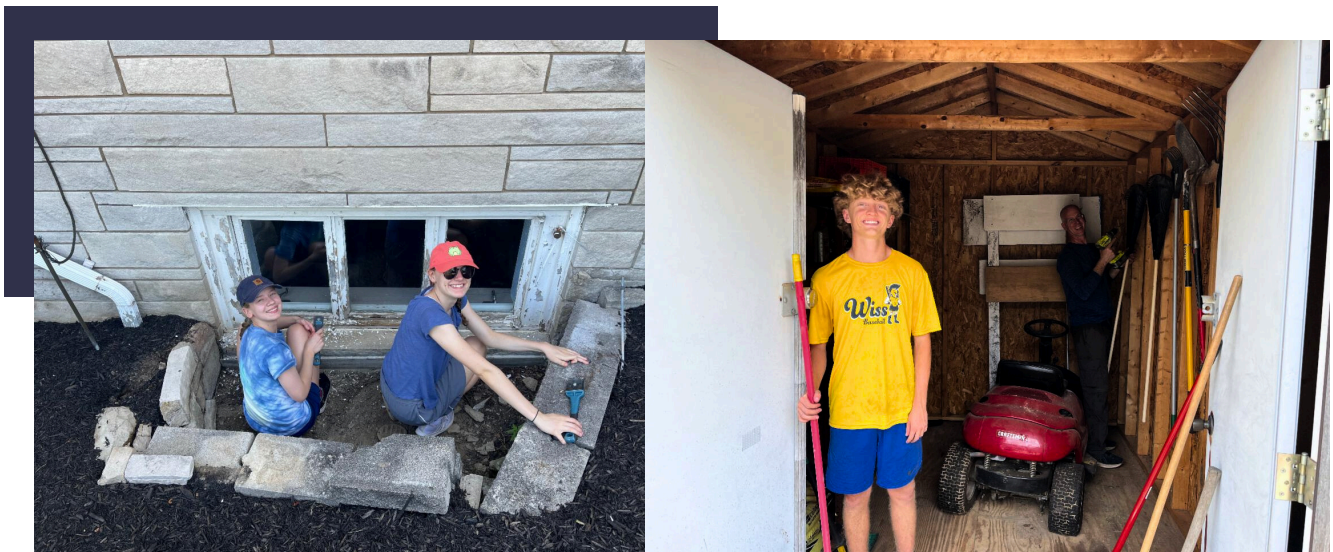
The start of **Sunday** was filled with preparation for the upcoming church service. Everyone got into their church clothes, the girls cleaned up their stuff out of the sanctuary (temporarily), and we all went outside to greet members of the church as they arrived. The church service was similar but also very different from our church's South Ridge service. There was a band that sang a lot of songs and a message, however, there was also an open mic session where one of the members had all of us come up to the front of the sanctuary so that the members of the church could pray for us.

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## YOUTH MISSION TRIP (continued)

Afterward, everyone went downstairs where we had lunch with the members of the church and talked for a while. Once we finished lunch and most of us changed out of our church clothes, we went out into the city of Pittsburgh to ride the incline up the side of Mount Washington. After getting off the incline we went further into the city to load up on sugar because Bree took us not only to a candy store where practically everyone got a \$5 box filled with candy but also to get ice cream immediately after before we returned to the church for dinner.



Most of **Monday** was spent working on different tasks around the church to make it look nicer. Some of the girls painted around the windows, a few of the guys including myself planted some pots out in the front lot, while Jonnie and Drew mostly worked on weed whacking, cleaning up the shed, and other various tasks outside.

In the second half of the day most people were continuing where they left off except for my small group. When we finished the planters outside, Praying Pelican asked us to organize a room that was filled with various seasonal decorations, unused desks and pews, and many more random things scattered about. By the end of the day most tasks had been completed except for the fact that when some of the masking tape was taken off, it took some of the dried paint with it, so a small group of the girls had to paint a new layer whenever there was free time.

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## YOUTH MISSION TRIP (continued)

**Tuesday** was filled with more time smelling mulch for me as we went into the city again, but instead of going to tour around we went to help out Tree Pittsburgh, a nonprofit organization that helps keep the trees on the streets of Pittsburgh healthy and growing. Our job was to continually go down a street and clean up trash surrounding trees, pull out any weeds, and lay new mulch down for all the baby trees. We managed to finish our job before lunch which meant we had some free time when we returned to mess around before our meal. Shortly after lunch, Pastor Joseph came to give us a talk about the different stages of us accepting and justifying our actions that turn us away from God and how He is always trying to save us no matter how submerged in our sin we go. I really liked this message and it was interesting to see the process of experimenting, trying, and justifying something being laid out in such a way.



**Wednesday** was our last workday before our free day and eventual return to Ambler. However, this day did not start off well for me as this was by far the worst amount of sleep I got on the whole trip. The other guys sleeping in the room felt that we needed a third fan to keep us cool because our air conditioning didn't work well. However, this third fan was much louder than the others and it kept me up for most of the night.

Regardless of that though, this was definitely my favorite workday as we went to Light of Life, an organization that works to transform the lives of those experiencing homelessness. Our group split into smaller teams again to fulfill different tasks such as packing boxes with food, preparing bags, or delivering to those who had signed up for food. My job was delivering to those who were walk ups, meaning they usually didn't bring a car. I had opportunities to converse with them and see the smiles on their faces as they received their food. One of the people at Light of Life heard about us coming to contribute our time to their cause and decided to make lunch for us, which we were not expecting. After our lunch we then took a short trip to North Park Evangelical Presbyterian to help clean the area that they were going to turn into a shower room for future Praying Pelican groups to use.



## YOUTH MISSION TRIP (continued)

Our last full day was **Thursday**, our free day, which we spent at a zoo/aquarium for the first half of the day and took a boat tour of Pittsburgh in the second half. At the zoo most of our group was very interested in the elephants and monkeys that we came across around the zoo. Though, I must say, most of the popular animals were clearly taking an off day as they were lying down sleeping for the most part. After we finished viewing and interacting with animals, we set out for lunch at Fire Side Public House.



The food was pretty good, though for whatever reason the root beers that most of the boys got, including myself, had WAY too much syrup in the mix. Following lunch, we went to Gateway Clipper where we took a boat tour of Pittsburgh and its various landmarks. We even went to relax at the Pittsburgh Point State Park following our arrival back on land. For dinner we ordered from Primanti Bros., which specialize in their ginormous sandwiches. After dinner we played games a bit before packing and cleaning up a bit before we left the following morning.



This trip was a whole lot of fun and I'm a little bummed I may not get to go on the mission trip next year, however, I definitely managed to have a great time not only seeing Pittsburgh for the first time but helping out others through Christ. This is Taylor signing off.



**Mission Trip Video**