

## CANDLE-LIT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE RETURNS Warm Glow at the End of the Year



Outside the night was dark and bitter cold, but inside this Christmas Eve, the sanctuary was warm and welcoming, full of people, and ablaze with candlelight.

The special music began 20 minutes before the start of the 5:00 p.m. service. A combined choir and band performed *Do Not Fear*. Playing for herself on the piano, **Alexandra Silveira** sang *First Noel*. **Christie** and **Josh Bruce** offered a guitar and violin duet of *Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming*. The band, led by **Jon Haines**, chimed in with *O, What a Glorious Night*, and the choir, led by **Susan Clark**, ushered the congregation into the service with *Adoration* as an introit.

The advent candle lighting liturgy was handled by **Pastor**

**Bruno Sousa** and his family: wife **Sonia**, daughters **Pamella** and **Nicolle**, and son **Asaph**. As it often does, the lighter caused difficulty, but soon the candles were lit, the opening prayer was offered, and the gathered congregation rose in force to sing *O Come All Ye Faithful*.

Our liturgist was **Becca Jo Yourko** and Scripture readings from Isaiah and Luke reminded us of the promises made long ago and how those promises were fulfilled in Jesus.

Following a brief sermon by **Dan Morrison**, the people shared the Lord's Supper. **Bert Holmes** expertly organized the Deacons and Elders who served the bread and wine.

And then came what for many is the highlight of the Christmas season: singing *Silent*

*Night* in a sanctuary lighted by the many small candles held by young and old.

A change in the sanctuary dimmer switches ended this tradition several years ago, but this year **Ron Herwig** set his mind to fixing the problem. And fix it he did! The result was a glowing success as we sang together in the peace of the sanctuary and the warm light of candles.

Among those gathered on Christmas Eve were **Joyce** and **David Fleming**, **Holly Levitz** and her mother **Carol**, newly retired **Russell** and **Robin Roach**, and **Naomi Trask**, who was able to come to church for the first time since she started cancer treatments in the fall.

And running the broadcast was 11-year-old **Lucas Herwig!**

# NEW CHURCH PLANTING MODEL EMERGES

## Unique Cooperation between HVPC and FPC

Launching new churches is tough work. Success rates for church plants are grim. And yet our denomination, the EPC, is committed to starting new churches. The partnership that has developed between HVPC and Fellowship Presbyterian Church (FPC) may be a new model for the denomination.

FPC began as a bible study in the living room of Brazilian immigrants **Edmir** and **Maria Eliza Schaper** in 2012. In time, the bible study outgrew the Schaper's home in Northeast Philadelphia and formed itself as El Shaddai Church. The new church rented commercial space for worship and study. In 2017, El Shaddai leaders asked **Bruno Sousa** to be their pastor and preach for them via zoom from Brazil, where he was an assistant pastor in a large church. By 2020, El Shaddai leaders decided to become a Presbyterian church and asked **Bruno** to come to the United States to guide them through the process. **Bruno** contacted the EPC National Director of Church Planting who, in turn, contacted HVPC pastor **Dan Morrison**.

In December 2020, Session signed a fraternal relations agreement with El Shaddai and invited the group to begin worshipping at HVPC. By October 2021, Pastor **Bruno** reached the US and lived with **Sue** and **Jimmy Belinsky** until he found a house for his family in Elkins Park.

Eventually, FPC will be an independent church with its own pastor and session. In the meantime, however, HVPC walks with FPC as it develops its leadership and gets organized.

Here are some important steps that happened this past year:



*Dr. Bruno Sousa was examined by the EPC's Presbytery of the East on Sept. 23, 2022, for his call as HVPC Assistant Pastor. At Langhorne Presbyterian Church, l. to r., Dan Morrison, Sue Belinsky, Bruno Sousa, Shari Hofstetter, Deb Jack, and Jordan Goretti.*

May, June, and July: Pastor **Bruno** preached every Sunday at HVPC so Pastor **Dan** could have a sabbatical to finish his dissertation.

September 11: Fourteen FPC children were baptized by **Dan Morrison** and **Bruno Sousa** under the aegis of the HVPC session. Six were examined by session and received as HVPC members.

October 15: HVPC and FPC cooperated on the Fall Festival. Brazilian barbecue was a hit.

October 18: Fifty people from FPC were added to the HVPC roll by Session.

November 13: FPC leaders **Matheus Schaper** and **Wesley Martins** were elected HVPC elders.

November 13: **Bruno Sousa** was installed as Assistant Pastor for Church Planting at HVPC with his salary paid solely by FPC.

In two years, the bonds of friendship have grown deep and rich. Our future together is bright.

## Congregational Notes

**Dan Bramer** teaches philosophy at Holy Family University. He won the School of Arts and Sciences Teaching award this year.

**Evelyn Brown** and her daughter **Jan Pinkney** attended worship on Christmas Sunday. **Jan**, who lives in Mansfield, Penna., regularly visits **Evelyn** at her Wesley Enhanced Living cottage in Hatboro.

**Josh** and **Rosie Bruce** welcomed their firstborn on November 30, 2022. **Sebastian Adamson Bruce** is his name and the boy weighed more than nine pounds at birth. He is a very pleasant baby.

**Rick Bruce** recently retired from Johnson & Johnson where he worked for more than two decades. He was a senior scientist involved in drug product development. Now he is a grandfather with more time for photography and kayaking.

**Cynthia Cornish** continues to lead the Rising Star group for middle school girls. They had their big end-of-the-year party on December 17.

**Naomi Crawford**, a seventh grader at Abington Middle School, has played violin since third grade. Recently she performed in her first concert at Abington Senior High.

It has been a hard Advent and Christmas for **Joan Clover**. She came down with shingles in November and has felt miserable for weeks, unable to work or to come to church. She has had lots of sympathy and visitors but just wants to get back in the swing of things!

**Jon Haines** recently won the Jon Landgraf prize for a pair of mittens he made out of rabbit hide harvested from his own Hatboro rabbit farm.

**Dave Hamalian** opened a grocery store at the corner of Huntingdon Pike and Red Lion Road in Huntingdon Valley. **Dave's Backyard Farms**, 2587 Huntingdon Pike, opened in August and carries locally-sourced organic vegetables, meats, seafood, bread, fruit, dairy, and other pantry items. Parking is on the Red Lion Road side of the building.

**George** and **Margie Hindley** are nearly empty-nesters! **Jimmy** is in his senior year at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. **Tim** graduated from Holy Ghost Prep and has started his degree program at DeSales University in Center Valley, Penna.

**Bert** and **Elaine Holmes** spent a few weeks in September and October visiting their son **Bill** in Florida. A railroad enthusiast, **Bert** was pleased to sample rails and monorails in the Sunshine State.

**Crystal Goretti** lost her father, **Bob Bear**, on November 15, 2022. **Jordan Goretti** started work as church secretary in September. He is in the church office Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**Amanda Lipinski** gave birth to **Anna Marie Lipinski** on June 24, 2022.

**Corey Metzler** is now **Corey D'Angelo**. She and hubby **Pete** tied the knot on June 19.

**Calvin Morrison** and his wife **Cheryl Morrison** recently moved to Bethlehem. Their new address is 33 East Goepf Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018.

**Rich Good**, **Joe** and **Christine Buoni**, and **Ryan Buoni** were one of the three-generation families we saw in worship during Advent.

**Pat Sarajian** is home and feeling like herself again, but she had a tough go of it for more than three weeks at Holy Redeemer Hospital. To add to her miseries, while at the hospital she contracted COVID! Her husband **Jay Sarajian** was with her every moment the hospital allowed visitors.

**Maureen Sweeney** acquired a good-sized RV this year which serves now as her mobile office. As much of her work is conducted over zoom, she has been able to travel far and wide, along with her trusty canine companion Peanut Butter, and has been spotted in MA, CT, IN, OK, TX, AZ and other exotic locations.

**Naomi Trask** finished cancer treatment. It was an unusual cancer, so the doctors threw everything and the kitchen sink at it. Now she is waiting to see if her hair will grow back in curly or straight.

### In Memoriam

**Virginia Crane Timberg** – April 10, 2022

**Barry Hofstetter** – April 28, 2022

**Robert Schreiner** – June 26, 2022



## BAPTISMS GALORE AT HVPC: Seventeen Baptisms (Plus One Dedication!) in 2022

It started with three baptisms on the north lawn in July as Huntingdon Valley Presbyterian Church gathered out of doors under the tent in the warm summer weather.



*Karineh Goretti, left, and her sister Dafne Goretti, help get the baptismal tank ready on July 10, 2022, at HVPC.*

Then there were 14 baptisms one evening in September at the Fellowship Presbyterian Church service. That was such a big to-do that the local newspaper sent out a reporter and photographer to cover the story.

And then on November 13, **Amanda Lipinski** presented her baby **Anna** for dedication. All in all, 2022 was a banner year welcoming young people into the fellowship at HVPC.

The first trio of baptisms happened on July 10 when **Annie Laurie Bramer**, **Annaliese Haines**, and **Sarah Pannacker** publicly professed their faith in

Jesus Christ and were dunked in our cattle trough under a clear blue sky. The three had earlier met with the HVPC Session to give their testimonies.

**Annie Laurie**, aged 7, is the daughter of HVPC members **Dan** and **Rebekah Bramer**. She has been attending HVPC since 2017. **Annaliese**, aged 10, is the daughter of **Jon** and **Laura Haines**. She has been a regular at HVPC since 2019. **Sarah**, aged 22, is the niece of **Rebekah Bramer** and granddaughter of **Naomi Trask**. She recently started attending HVPC with the **Bramers**.

In September, a large group from Fellowship Presbyterian Church came to a special meeting of the HVPC Session. They were parents wanting to have their children baptized and youths asking to be baptized. Session approved believer baptisms for six young Christians and covenant baptisms of eight babies.



*Minister of Celebrations Charlene Crawford, standing, assists as Pastor Dan Morrison gets ready to baptize Annie Laurie Bramer, July 10, 2022, at HVPC.*



**BUCKS COUNTY**  
**Courier Times**  
 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2022 | BUCKSCOUNTY.COURIERTIMES.COM  
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**Brazilian immigrants find a home at church**



**Designer gets the hang of Christmas ornaments**

**Two communities gather under one steeple in Huntingdon Valley**

**Jim McGinnis** Bucks County Courier Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

Who stands beside you ... when you stand before God. Inside the Huntingdon Valley Presbyterian Church, a pastor from Brazil is preaching in Portuguese to Christians from the Philadelphia suburbs and recent immigrants from South America. Beside the altar, an old pipe organ gathers dust, and the church secretary pounds conga drums. In a steel tub filled with holy water, 14 new members from Brazil are baptized. Proud parents led a nervous little girl looking every bit the princess toward her sacrificial splash. A baby girl bedecked in pink bows got a sprinkle of holy water to the scalp. On a Sunday evening, this church in an affluent and predominantly white community is filled with families of many backgrounds. Older couples share the pews with 12-year-old boys in tiny suits. A peaceful meditation is sometimes shattered by a child's cry. A young girl — a bundle of energy — stomps noisily down the center aisle. Faith helps them brush past some of the natural tensions. See CHURCH, Page 11A

“Normally, you find your demographic, and you work with it, but this is much more complicated. Bringing these two groups together requires believers on both sides of the aisle to be more accommodating, intentional and humble.”

**Pastor Daniel Morrison**  
 Huntingdon Valley Presbyterian Church

Since 1985, Christopher Radtke has been famous for his Christmas tree ornaments. This year he's designing ornaments under a new brand, HeARTfully Yours.

**GIVE A CHRISTMAS**

Goal: \$32,000  
 Given to date: \$94,353  
 Donations: 2A

The six believers baptized from FPC were **Maria Eduard Leite da Silva**, one day shy of being 10, **Julia Azevedo Santos**, 9, and her brother **Filipe Azevedo Santos**, 14, **Rayssa Fernandes Lamarche**, 14, **Endrio de Paula Nunes**, 13, and **Melissa Victoria Alves Vieira**, 14. By being examined by the HVPC session and being baptized under its authority, these six also became members of HVPC.

The infants and young children who received covenant baptisms included **Cloe Guerra Rodrigues**, **Sophie Guerra Rodrigues**, **Sarah Leite da Silva**, **Cecilia Leite da Silva**, **Ana Carolina Pereira dos Reis**, **Hellen Fernandes Lamarche**, **Helena Fernandes Lamarche**, and **Benjamin Uceta Silverio**.

Fourteen baptisms in one worship service is truly remarkable, but it is not the all-time HVPC high. On Sunday, February 5, 1888, a total of 20 adults were baptized at a single worship service! **William Pomeroy Fulton** was our pastor at that time. A close runner-up was the Sunday, March 1, 1896, worship service at which a baker's dozen adults were baptized at HVPC, the Rev. **John F. Nicholas** being the officiant that time. September 11, 2022, however, still holds a respectable second place in the HVPC record books.

Breaking the 1888 record should be the FPC and HVPC goal for 2023!



Pastor **Bruno Sousa** on the front page of the Bucks County Courier Times in an article about HVPC and FPC. The newspaper came to cover the story of 14 people being baptized at one service.

At the 6:00 p.m. Fellowship Presbyterian Church service on September 11, all 14 baptisms were conducted, Pastor **Bruno Sousa** and Pastor **Dan Morrison** taking turns dunking young people in the baptismal tank and pouring water on the heads of babies.

**Jim McGinnis**, a writer for the Bucks County Courier Times, heard there would be 14 baptisms at a single church service and thought it would make a good story. His story and photographs finally appeared in the Christmas Day edition of the Courier Times and the Doylestown Intelligencer. Both papers are owned by Gannett and are part of the USA Today network.



Pastor **Dan Morrison** baptizes **Cloe Guerra Rodrigues** on September 11, 2022, at a service of FPC.

# Session and Deacon News

## New Officers Elected

At the November 2022 annual congregational meeting, three new ruling elders and five new deacons were elected, giving us a full roster on both the Session and Board of Deacons for the first time in a long while. Special thanks to **Noel Wolfe** and the Nominating Committee. Here is a brief introduction to the officers who will serve our church in the coming years.

### New Deacons

Here is the lineup of those elected to serve as deacons. These folks will be very busy taking care of many needs in the congregation and the community.

**Ginny Aikens** and **Anne Caulfield** are two good friends who came to HVPC in 2021 from Langhorne Presbyterian Church. When one of them was recruited by the Nominating Committee, it was clear they were a two-for-one deal so the two will join the Board of Deacons together. At the December meeting, **Anne** was elected moderator and **Ginny** vice moderator. No doubt, they will be a dynamic duo.

**Joyce Codispoti**, a Huntingdon Valley resident who is active with the Miriam Circle, joined HVPC in 2015. This is the first time she has been elected to an office at HVPC.

**Josh Bruce** joined HVPC in 2017 and married the pastor's daughter **Rosie**. He regularly plays violin with the church band. In November, he became a first-time father. He is our youngest deacon.

**Shari Hofstetter** came to HVPC in 2018 with her husband **Barry**, who died in April. She is under care of Session as she prepares for ordination as an EPC pastor. She was elected treasurer of the deacons.

Here is the lineup of all the deacons in their classes.

Board of Deacons		
2023	2024	2025
Anne Caulfield	Joan Clover	Josh Bruce
Ginny Aikens	Ron Herwig	Shari Hofstetter
Dwayne Cornish	Crystal Goretti	Joyce Codispoti

### New Ruling Elders

Each Presbyterian church is governed by a Session, which is a board composed of ruling elders with the pastor of the church, the teaching elder, serving as the moderator of the board.

Our new elders-elect this year include **Jon Haines**, who joined HVPC in 2019 and serves as our band leader. He is the father of three and his wife, **Laura Haines**, serves as our children's minister. **Jon** is active in the Presbyterian Stogie Society men's prayer group and works as a sales representative for a company that produces industrial printers.

Coming onto the Session from the Fellowship Presbyterian Church congregation are **Wesley Martins** and **Matt Schaper**.

Matt's parents, **Edmir** and **Maria Eliza Schaper** are the founders of the home bible study which has grown into Fellowship Presbyterian Church. He literally grew up in the church and has been serving as a de facto elder for a long while. He is married to **Franciely**, and they have three children, **Daniel**, **Caleb**, and **Emilia**.

**Wesley** (the "c" is silent) **Martins** works as a machinist. He and his wife **Liliana**, who is a medical translator, have two children in Valley Christian School, **Sarah** and **Isaac**.

Also elected was **George Hindley**, a veteran elder, who agreed to another tour of duty after a year off. Here is how the session classes break out.

Session		
2023	2024	2025
Wesley Martins	Dan Bramer	Jon Haines
Deb Jack	Cynthia Cornish	Matt Schaper
Noel Wolfe	Jordan Goretti	George Hindley



# COMBINED SERVICE EXPERIMENT WELL RECEIVED

## Grumbling that Plagued Past Attempts Gone

For the first time since the summer of 2005, the entire HVPC congregation has been meeting week-after-week in a single Sunday morning service. While combined services in past years were beset with bitter complaints, thus far the reaction has been positive.

The experiment was prompted by declining numbers in the late service. "For months, we have been doing everything we can to support the late service," **Dan Morrison** said. "Half the choir and nearly all of the liturgists come from the early service. It seemed like Advent would be a great time to get everyone together."

In December, Session decided to extend the experiment through January and to poll the congregation on the results with a more final decision to be taken at the February meeting of Session.

Under the experimental plan, Sunday school begins at 9:30 a.m. and the worship service gets started at 10:45 a.m., running to noon. During Advent and Christmas, the choir sang anthems every week and the combined force of the band and the choir brought greater numbers into the choir.

One inconvenience has been that some people have been ousted from their accustomed pews or have had to share the pew with other people. But the spirit in the worship services has been decidedly joyful, spirited, and fun.

"It's been going very well," **Rich Good** said. "You see it during the passing of the peace when we stand and greet each other. The whole room is moving. There is no awkwardness at all. I look at that and say, "Good!""

There are a number of practical advantages to



*Children gather on the chancel for one of Pastor **Dan Morrison's** children's sermons during the Advent season. The unified worship services during the Advent and Christmas season featured music from both the choir and the praise band.*

having a single unified services, including a simpler morning schedule, more volunteers available to help, reduced stress on the staff, and increased opportunities for people to get to know each other. Two dramatic effect of the unified service are the increased volume of congregational singing and a joyful bustling in the sanctuary.

But benefits always come with a cost. A unified service requires a willingness to cooperate and get along, which is hard. If we insist on always getting our way, this experiment will fail.

"Paul's plea to the church at Philippi speaks to us in this situation," said Pastor **Dan Morrison**. Paul begged, "Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having one love, one spirit and one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."



## 2022 FALL FESTIVAL A HUGE HIT

### Hayrides and Brazilian Barbecue Highlights



*Steve Quinter pilots his tractor pulling a hay wagon filled with kids at the Fall Festival. More than 300 people attended the event.*

The savor of Brazilian barbecue wafted, and the excited laughter of children rang in the warm evening air at the 2022 Fall Festival as more than 300 gathered on the HVPC campus. Some thought it was our best Fall Festival ever, building on the enormous success of the 2021 event organized by **Tammy Herwig**.

"I loved what **Tammy** created. The groundwork she laid was fantastic," said **Jon Haines**, organizer of the 2022 outdoor food and fun festival. "I had the impression we could make it bigger if we got the whole church behind it including Pastor **Bruno Sousa** and the Fellowship Presbyterian Church."

**Jon** recruited and organized the many people who joined to make the success. Almighty God provided the perfect fall weather.

Without a doubt the Brazilian barbecue, which required the construction of a special BBQ pit and a truckload of meat from a gourmet grocery store, was a big hit. **Washington Xavier** and **Alan Silveira** supervised the pit and made believers of first-time Brazilian BBQ samplers.

**Ron Herwig** showed up early to get things set up. **Deb Jack** recruited and organized the high school volunteers. **Charlene Crawford** made sure we had three bounce houses.

The kids lined up 15-deep to have faces painted by **Becca Jo Yourko** and **Sarah Pannacker**.

**BethAnn Clark** organized the popular cake walk with dollar store prizes. "That brought kids racing across the lawn," reported **Jon Haines**. **Joan Clover** and **Bob Herwig** took care of the kitchen, organizing hotdogs and drinks, desserts, and many sides. No one went hungry.

And, as in past years, **Steve Quinter** and his vintage tractor were a hit with the kids.

### **Good News!**

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