

# BELL TOWER NEWS

College Hill Presbyterian Church – MAY 2024

513.541.5676 | 5742 Hamilton Ave. | Cincinnati, OH 45224 | [chpc.org](http://chpc.org)

## HERE COMES THE BRIDE. . .

'TIS THE SEASON OF WEDDINGS—a perfect time to reflect upon the picture God gives of Jesus Christ, the bridegroom, and his bride without wrinkle or spot, the Church (Ephesians 5:21-33). The current preaching series, *Jesus' Living Will & Testament*, covers over-arching themes. Under-girding all these is faithfulness in our relationships—with God and others—year around.

### FINISH WHAT YOU START

BY DAN MC NERNEY

Are we losing a sense of faithfulness in our world today? Are we placing

such an enormous emphasis on short-term results and returns that we have forgotten the virtues of being faithful over longer periods of time? Is there a new ethic emerging of just getting rid of someone who is no longer useful to us; firing them is the new, expedient solution. Are people changing jobs so often these days or constantly positioning themselves for better opportunities that they have forgotten God's call on their lives to be faithful to one another? God is faithful to us, and he calls us to be faithful to him and one another. Faithfulness brings freedom and peace to our

spirits. An absence of faithfulness brings darkness, sin, and endless entanglements to our souls, every time. We are all wanting to be loved, understood, and nurtured; and no one provides that better for us than God. And in return he calls us to be faithful to him, our spouses, families, friends, co-workers, and neighbors.

At the heart of faithfulness is mercy and forgiveness. For any relationship to succeed, the parties involved must learn to forgive one another when a faithless, selfish act has occurred. After all, that is how God treats us, giving us second chances all the time. The book of Lamentations reminds us, "The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin fresh each morning" (Lam. 3:22,23).

Grace is the oil for *any* relationship to function well and flourish. God loves honest hearts, and he wants us to be blessed by long-term relationships. However, he would rather have us run from him, ignore him, or even wrestle with him, than be lukewarm and not fully committed to our relationship with him. He wants us to be either hot or cold, but never tepid. Jesus said to

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)



# VISION BECOMES A DREAM WHICH IS A REALITY

In the Fall of 2023, the CHPC Global Outreach Team shared a vision for two trips to Kenya to serve others: May 16-26, 2024. Both build upon relationships developed over many years. As people prayed, the “vision” grew into a special “dream” for eight people: Barbara McMullen, Kelley Foresman, Rev. Erwin Goedicke, Jill and Michael Gaines, Catherine Sanders, and Dave and Maggie Smith and how we can support them in prayer.

## BY MARY SUE VERHAGEN

Pray for CHPC'S Kenya Outreach 2024 Team. The team departs May 16. To recover from their long flight, they will spend their first day together on a game drive near Mt Kenya. Then they will go to serve in two different locations:

**NAIROBI**, the capital city of Kenya. Gabriel Howard, a CHPC Global Worker, teaches English to adult refugees there. *Catherine Sanders and Mike and Jill*

*Gaines will assist him and the other teachers in classes and visit with students and families as opportunities arise.*

**KINANGOP PLATEAU**, 74 miles (2 1/2 hours) north of Nairobi. Lucy Gacheru, a long-time friend of CHPC, leads Hope Community Centre in this beautiful area. *Kelley Foresman, Barbara McMullen, Dave*

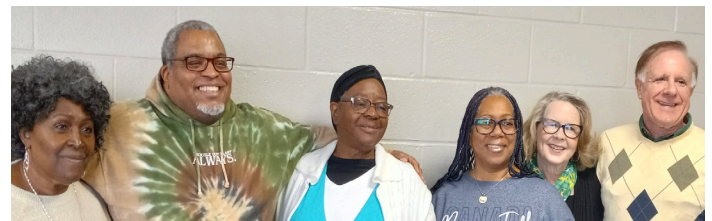


*and Maggie Smith, and Rev. Erwin Goedicke will serve Lucy by providing devotions and special activities for Lucy's school-age children—about 280 of them at the moment!*

WHAT TO PRAY...  
Please pray regularly for

each team member, each ministry host, and the students they serve.

- *Preparation for travel:*  
Full funding for each team member (give at [www.CHPC.org/Kenya](http://www.CHPC.org/Kenya)).  
God's guidance preparing families and jobs/ministries for their absence.  
Excellent physical and spiritual health before, during, and after travel.
- *Safety in travel and ministry:*  
Timely flights and connections for team members and luggage; safety in all car and van travel – on roads and off! No accidents, injuries, or harm of any kind.
- *Good health and acting wisely:*  
Being prepared for minor illnesses.  
Good regular sleep and quick adjustment to Kenya time. No bad reactions to food or medicines.
- *God's supernatural wisdom:*  
Decision making and problem solving when things don't go as planned.  
Sharing God's love appropriately in unfamiliar cultural settings.  
Ministering encouragement to our hosts, Gabe and Sharleen Howard and Lucy Gacheru.
- *Clear communication between team members and ministry hosts:*  
Hearts daily committed to the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace  
Humility, patience, attentiveness, and flexibility in a cross-cultural setting.
- *Readiness for unexpected but God-ordained opportunities to bring glory to the LORD!*



CATHERINE SANDERS, MIKE GAINES, BARBARA MC MULLEN  
JILL GAINES, MAGGIE AND DAVE SMITH. KELLEY FORESMAN  
AND REV. ERWIN GOEDICKE NOT PICTURED.

## USA SWIMMING FOUNDATION AWARDS \$780,000 IN 2024 LEARN-TO-SWIM GRANTS FOR SWIM LESSONS

The USA Swimming Foundation, the philanthropic arm of USA Swimming, today announced its initial round of 2024 Learn-to-Swim Grant program funding. It awarded \$780,000 to 162 swim lesson providers nationwide, vetting more than 400 applications through a competitive annual review process. These funds will be distributed across 40 states to provide approximately 14,500 individuals with the opportunity to learn the lifesaving skill of water safety.

THE CHPC SWIM MINISTRY IS ONE OF THREE GRANT RECIPIENTS IN OHIO. THE ONLY ONE IN CINCINNATI.



“The USA Swimming Foundation is proud to continue providing *Learn-to-Swim* opportunities at the local level for both adults and youth,” said USA Swimming Foundation Executive Director Elaine Calip. “With the excitement surrounding U.S. Olympic Team Trials, Swimming, and the Olympic Games, we anticipate an increased interest in our sport. We are thrilled to continue our partnership with lesson providers nationwide to keep kids and adults safe in and around the water.”

## VINCE WILSON CREATIVELY MEETS REFUGES' NEEDS FOR WORDS AND "WHEELS"



walk but a very short bike ride.

Vince Wilson, Paul and Mary Sue Verhagens' son-in-law (Katy's husband), has been teaching the refugees English at the Metanoia Center (113 - 115 N Wayne Ave, Lockland, OH 45215). He's also providing refurbished bicycles to people in the community. This April through June, he is operating a Friday workshop where the men can come, repair their bikes with his tools, build their first bike, or help others in need. Beyond meeting transportation needs, this bicycle ministry seeks to demonstrate to these Muslim men an overwhelming sense of Christian hospitality.

HAVE A BIKE IN ANY CONDITION GATHERING DUST? Consider donating it or any type of bike parts or helmets to bless someone in God's name. Contact Vince at [vincent@queencitybike.org](mailto:vincent@queencitybike.org) and arrange for a pick-up!

## BICYCLE BUILT FOR TWO, OR THREE, OR MORE...

Hundreds of recent West African refugees have chosen to make their homes in Lockland, OH. They typically arrive with little beyond the clothing on their backs, then endure a years-long process to secure asylum and work permits. A normal errand in this community is 1-4 miles – a long

Since 2007, The USA Swimming Foundation has awarded more than \$8 million in grants to help fund youth and adults *Learn-to-Swim* programs nationwide.

Youth *Learn-to-Swim* grants of \$650,000 will be distributed to 124 providers for free or reduced-cost swim lessons and impacting an estimated 12,000 children.”

This is the fifth consecutive year the CHPC Swim Ministry has received the USA Swimming Foundation award. Scholarship grants and private donations allow us to say “yes” to families involved in Jesus University ballet, Whiz Kids and the “under-served” children and teens in the broader Cincinnati community. For more information see page 6, or go to the website: [CHPC.org/SWIM](http://CHPC.org/SWIM).

# HERE COMES THE BRIDE... FINISH WHAT YOU START

BY DAN MC NERNEY

(CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT COVER)

the church in Laodicea, "But since you are lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16).

God wants us to count the costs before beginning down the road with him, no matter how long it takes. Similarly, he wants us to think deeply about our commitments in marriage or forging important relationships with friends and fellow believers before beginning a life with them. He does not want us to start something we are not ready to finish. And when we are faithful with small things, God will give us greater treasures filled with larger blessings. Jesus said to his disciples, "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'" (Matthew 25:21).

I grew up during a time in the 1960s and '70s when individual rights and experiences were elevated to new levels of appreciation and desire. However, instead of ushering in an era filled with greater "peace and love," as was the objective, many of these so-called virtuous but often misguided pursuits gave birth to excessive individualism, self-centered lifestyles, and an



unfortunate fear of commitment which now permeates much of modern life. Today, fewer people are marrying, staying in the same jobs, or joining local community clubs, religious organizations, or activities. An increasing number of people prefer staying within the comforts of their homes and pursuing virtual activities or viewing opportunities on computers. Perhaps they are avoiding relationships that sometimes can be messy and unpredictable. Virtual activities are much easier for them. Relationships, after all, require a lot of effort. And, in the end, there's always a risk that someone might get hurt by being unfaithful. Is that a risk worth taking?

As I look back on my own life, I am extremely grateful for my Christian faith. I am grateful that my faith demands crucial decisions and commitments and provides a life of constant community for me. As a follower of Jesus, I cannot sit back and pursue life on my own terms; I can't sit comfortably in the middle ground avoiding other people, keeping all my options open while just pursuing my own interests. That is not how God works. He wants me to go in the opposite direction, forging a vibrant relationship with

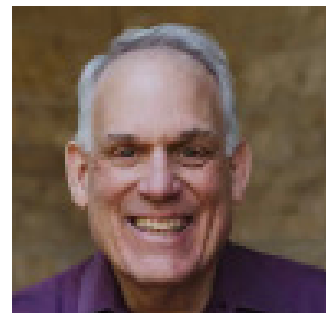
him and others. He knows that commitment will give me greater freedom, not greater restriction. As things turned out, and by God's merciful grace, I am one of those people who took his time to make a lot of very important life decisions. In fact, I was spared from making a lot of poor decisions. It was not until age 27 that I decided to become a follower of Jesus, and it was not until age 40 that I married my dear wife, Sharon, and was ordained in the same summer to full-time ministry within the Presbyterian Church USA. Now these three commitments have become the cornerstones of my life on which I have been blessed to build my family and calling. God has been incredibly faithful to me. And with his help, I am trying to be equally faithful to him, my family, friends, and ministry going forward into the remaining years of my life.

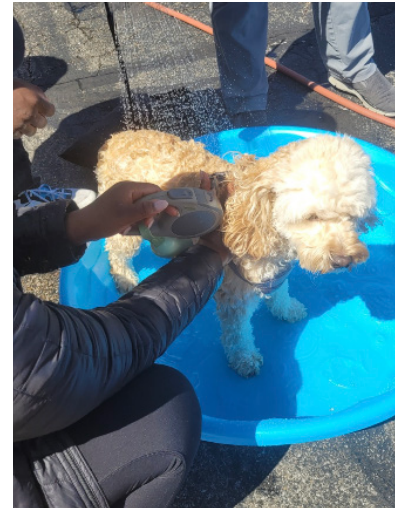
I am so glad we do not have a fickle or capricious God. That would be incredibly unsettling. On the contrary, we have a most dependable, loving, and faithful God who is always there for us, and he invites us to be faithful with him and others. "Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unflinching love on those who love him and obey his commands" (Deuteronomy 7:9). He is always faithful to us and wants us to be faithful to him.

**DAN MC NERNEY**, Senior Associate Director with Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship (PFF), has spent the last 40 years of his life engaged in some form of international church activity. He said, "I have been blessed to have forged lasting relationships and partnerships with Christian leaders from many different cultures. I have learned that lasting cross-cultural partnerships require a lot of time, attention, humility, and a willingness to learn from past mistakes. It takes many visits cross-culturally to begin understanding what challenges and joys new friends from Uganda, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, and Iran are experiencing and how I as an American might be able to encourage and partner with them. Frontier Fellowship places a great emphasis faithful partnerships nurtured by time and the Holy Spirit."

Learn more about the exciting relational ministry of PFF at <https://frontierfellowship.com>

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We had gorgeous weather on April 16th for our DOG WASH fund raiser. 12 dogs came with their owners to be pampered.

It was wonderful having parents, students, and leaders serving side by side. We raised \$1,483 of our goal of \$1500. It was a wonderful day!!!

We greatly appreciate the kindness and generosity and continued investment in our Family Ministries, especially for our youth missions programs.

NIKKI MCKENNA, DIRECTOR OF CHPC'S FAMILY MINISTRIES



# Grow

BY NIKKI MCKENNA, DIRECTOR OF CHPC'S FAMILY MINISTRIES

Recently, the Family Ministries Team premiered the new Sunday morning curriculum for children. Read about these exciting changes and invite families with children to GROW in their relationship with God.

"Grow Kids" takes kids through every major Bible story in three years. Every year, we will spend an equal amount of time in the Old and New Testaments — six months each! The Old Testament is taught chronologically over three years, while the New Testament is taught chronologically every year (but with new stories each time). At the end of three years, we start all over again! We know you want a balance between a predictable, consistent structure and

fresh innovative ideas too!

In *Grow Kids*, here's how we find that balance:

**WHAT CHANGES?** With kids, you never want your teaching to get boring. So, every month, you'll get a fun new series title and theme that complement that month's Bible stories! After three years, when we revisit the same stories again, the series themes will be new all over again so you can help kids rediscover the same stories in brand new ways.



**WHAT STAYS THE SAME?** Keeping our teaching fresh is important, but predictability is important too. That's why the core structure of our scope and sequence never changes.

You can see the whole thing in the example below!

We separate the Bible into 36 chronological topics and cycle through them all every three years. You can count on these topics, in this order, year after year.

For example:

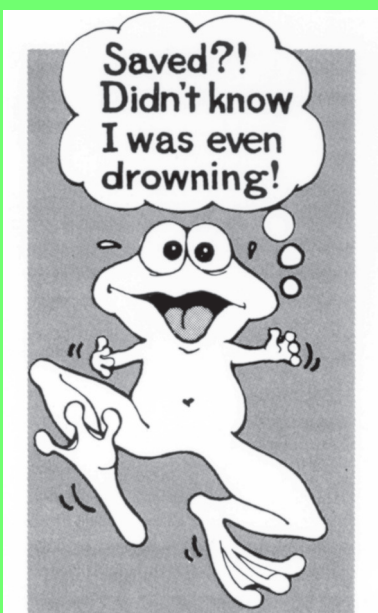
The EARLY CHURCH – May 2024  
Week 1 - Take the first step — believe in Jesus. Jesus ascends to heaven (Acts 1).

Week 2 - Take another step — pray for others. Peter and John heal a man (Acts 3).

Week 3 - Take a big step — the Holy Spirit makes us brave. Stephen stands before the Sanhedrin (Acts 6-7).

Week 4 - Don't skip this step — tell others about Jesus. Paul shares the gospel with Phillip the Ethiopian man (Acts 8).

We in CHPC's Family Ministries are excited to share this new curriculum with our church. We hope you personally participate in some way and tell children you know and those who you commit "to nurture and raise up in their Christian walk" to come experience new GROWth with Jesus.



## **DATES for LESSONS** **FROM THE CHPC SWIMMING MINISTRY**

### **Children & Teens Lessons**

(age 5 and above) at North Hills Swim Club.  
Mornings —10 AM, 11 AM or 12 Noon  
2 separate weeks

Week #1 July 15-19; Week #2 July 29 to Aug 2

### **Adult lessons**

6-7 PM Twin Tower's Wellness Connection Pool  
2 separate weeks

Week A July 8-12; Week B July 22-26

**OUR ONLINE BROCHURE**  
is available at [www.chpc.org/swim](http://www.chpc.org/swim)

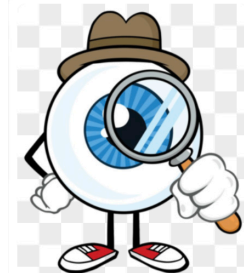
**REGISTER NOW...SPACE IS LIMITED.**

## **COMING SOON... CONNECTIONS CAMP**

**JULY 22-26, 9 AM-12 PM**

Day Camp for Grades K to 6th  
where students grades 7 and up  
serve with the camp staff.

THEME:  
"ON  
THE  
CASE"





This 4-day Summer Day Camp is designed for children ages 3-8

WHEN: From 9 AM to 12:15 PM  
 Mon., July 29th to  
 Thurs., Aug. 1st,  
 in the 3C's Wing of the CHPC  
 Learning Center

COST: \$70/first child.  
 \$10 discount for each additional  
 sibling (\$60, \$50, \$40). Discount  
 is calculated at bottom of form.  
 Children must have emergency  
 information on file before  
 attending the 3Cs' Camp.

FULL PAYMENT IS DUE AT  
 REGISTRATION. Cancellations  
 before May 31st will receive a refund  
 less any processing fees.



*When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the door frame and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. —Exodus 12:23 (NIV)*

## WHAT'S EXCITING, FUN, LOUD, AND SOMETIMES EVEN MESSY? M-FUGE

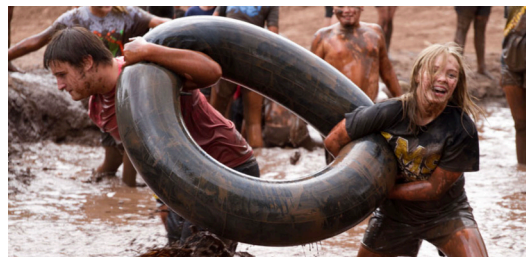
Students will love camp in South-eastern U. in Lakeland, FL, July 8-12 because it's all those things. Every moment spent at FUGE (short for CentriFUGE) Camp is designed to take students out of their normal routine and place them into an environment that is focused on life-change by focusing on "things that really matter."

Students will experience the Lord either for the first time or in a new way at camp, and we trust that camp will become a spiritual marker in their lives! Camp is built around experiencing Biblical community and creating a fun environment where life change takes place!

Our campers are also part of M-FUGE, a mission experience that opens their eyes to opportunities that they may have to serve in their own communities, learning to live life each day on mission!

### FUND-RAISING EFFORTS

CHPC's Youth have been raising funds for travel and camp since last



MAYHEM AND MISSION = M-FUGE



fall: Car Wash; Holiday Talent Show, Gift Wrap & Hot Chocolate Station; Virtual Silent Auction; Dog Wash; Yard Sale (MAY 11, 10 AM-3 PM); and coming in June "Peer 2 Peer – LIVE Fundraiser."

### INVEST IN A CAMPER

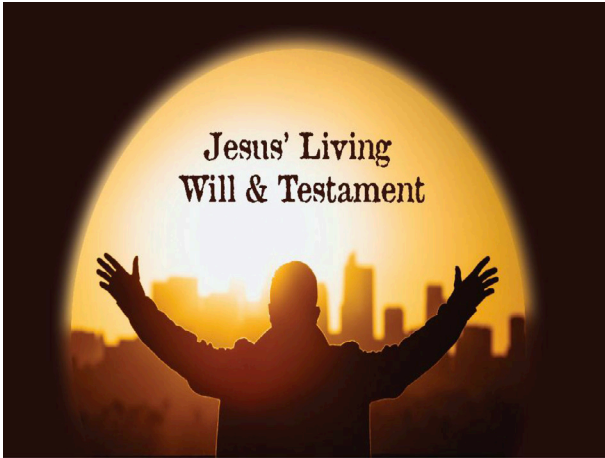
Investors can visit [chpc.org/youth](http://chpc.org/youth) to learn more about Fuge and the students and leaders serving this year, and to make donations! Fees are \$400 per camper. Support a specific camper or provide a general scholarship. Know that your investment will pay great dividends in God's Kingdom!

Editor's Note: In the 13th Century BC, the Hebrew people living in Egypt cried out to God because of the cruel rule of Pharaoh. God's reply was 10 miraculous events, the last being "death of all first-borns." Moses told the Elders of Israel how to escape that curse—"Passover" has been remembered and celebrated since.

It was an amazing night and what a story to tell. I wonder how many times God has protected each of us in ways that we don't even know? How many times has God intervened for a car to not hit you or illness to pass you by or food to not harm your body? We don't know, but we trust that God is still protecting us and making a way for his people.

Father God, we know that you can do all things and nothing is too difficult for you. We remember your faithfulness on that first Passover night and trust that You are still protecting us. You are still making a way for your people. Thank you for protecting us in ways that we can't ever know or acknowledge. We are grateful to be yours, an Easter people celebrating our Risen Lord. In Jesus, Amen.

— CHRISTY ROEDIGER



## Jesus' Living Will & Testament

### PREACHING IN MAY

BY REV. DR. ANDREW SMITH, PASTOR

*The essence of testimony is to inform others of the ability and power of God to deliver on His promises, in order to encourage those already trusting in Him, and those who express confidence in the counsel of His Word. Our testimony encourages others.*

In John 13-18, Jesus gives vital instructions to his disciples—his Farewell Discourse and his High Priestly Prayer. In the current preaching series, we have referred to them

as *Jesus' Living Will and Testament*. It's not his Last Will because Jesus is STILL ALIVE!

We will continue exploring his *Living Words* for all who join him on this exciting journey. Jesus does not hold back. He challenges, comforts, explains, and instructs us with an explicit declaration of the core

necessities of living life with God in the power of Jesus' resurrection. Here are his Living Words :

#### 5/5 JOY — JOHN 16:16-33

Even amid the storms of life, Jesus leads us with love and joy. The power of the resurrection proves to us that Jesus has overcome the evil of this world. His joy continues forever.

#### 5/12 ONE — JOHN 17:1-19

The power of the resurrection binds together people of all backgrounds, sizes, and types. Jesus becomes

our common pursuit. His love is so grand that we are drawn to him and one another with great affection. This is Jesus ultimate prayer – that his followers may be one.

#### 5/19 ONE SERVICE

AT 10:30AM OUTSIDE

THE HOLY SPIRIT—JOHN 14:15-31, 16:5-15.  
PENTECOST & GRADUATION SUNDAY

Jesus promises never to leave us. Jesus promises we will have all we need to flourish in obedience to him. God, the Holy Spirit, comes upon us at Jesus' departure. The very power and presence of God are within all who believe.

#### 5/26 WORLD — JOHN 17:20-26

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Jesus longs to include the whole world in his love. We will hear from Molly and Luke Verhagen about how we continue to share Jesus with the world through them and other mission workers. God loves the whole world, including YOU.



CHG AT CHPC THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH 7PM, FEBRUARY TO NOVEMBER.

Think you have a "black thumb"? (no disrespect intended). Come and meet neighbors who can help your garden bloom. Have a "green thumb"? Enrich your gardening experiences and build relationships with fun folks who share your interest. Expect great programs, **enrichment projects like**

**the Spring Plant Sale**, the College Hill Garden Walk, and the Wee-Patch Fall Festival for families. Request email reminders and meeting minutes— contact [collegehillgardeners@gmail.com](mailto:collegehillgardeners@gmail.com).

**Have an idea for *Bell Tower News*?** Feedback? Have something to submit or a photo of an event? Request an article about \_\_\_\_\_, or more by a particular writer? Contact the BTN Editor, Sam Stare, 513-382-5902 or email [starecvg@aol.com](mailto:starecvg@aol.com) .

GREAT PRICES. COME EARLY.

COLLEGE HILL GARDENERS ...dig this!

# Plant sale

Sat, May 4th | 9-12  
Patrick's Park  
5943 Hamilton Ave

annuals  
perennials  
herbs  
veg

COLLEGE HILL Gardeners