



# The Presbyter

March 2023

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

## The Arts in April



I hope that each of you will put Saturday evening, April 15<sup>th</sup> (7:00 pm) on your calendars to come together in our sanctuary to experience **CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPARD**, a 2016 oratorio by Craig Hella Johnson. To call this a “performance” and to call those who will come “listeners” does not accurately describe what awaits you. The work does tell the perhaps forgotten story of the 1988 hate-crime murder (25 years ago now) of a gay college student in Wyoming, an “ordinary boy” who “never could imagine his life could be this story” yet became a modern-day martyr with federal hate-crime legislation named for him. But the work prefaces and follows that telling with the questions, “why retell, why remember that tragic event,” and most im-

portantly, “what can we each do with the sadness, anger, and frustration it ignites in us?” (and with the barrage of almost daily stories we read of hatred and humans’ cruelty toward one another.) Ultimately, the work is better described as an “experience” or a “secular sermon,” perhaps even “life-changing.” Come at your own risk, but please come because **CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPARD** is ultimately less about Matthew Shepard than it is about you, me, and us.

This presentation is intended as a part of our larger Lent and post-Lent exploration of how we view and treat “others.” That word is far from innocent. The central image in **CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPARD** is the fence on which he was tied, beaten, and left to die. Beyond the killers, the fence is the only witness to the events of that night, and it finds voice and sings no less than four times during the story, becoming, initially, a cross-like symbol of sacrifice, but later, something even more powerful. Just as that physical fence was later torn down, we are invited to find, pilgrimage to, and tear down our own mental “fences,” those un-noticed lines and arbitrary lines we draw to understand (control?) the world but that separate us from others, be they based on sexuality, gender, religion, age, health, nationality, politics, social class, etc. The first and last word of the piece is simply, “All.”

A page has been added to the church website with additional information and links should you want to make learning more about Matthew Shepard and this piece a part of your personal Lenten discipline. You can learn more about Matthew Shepard and the Foundation that bears his name, read all the lyrics, and link to a performance of the complete work.

As Robert Frost asks us to ponder, do “good fences make good neighbors”?

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## Camp Lackawanna is accepting registrations for the Summer 2023 Season!

Camp programs are scheduled between June 23 through July 21.

Check out the options  
www.camplackawanna.org

Camping scholarships are available from our Christian Education Committee. Check with Jana Schillinger for details.

Programs are planned for children and young people in grades 1 through 12.



The Presbyter deadline for the April 2023 issue is March 17

The Presbyter is a monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church, 300 School Street, Clarks Summit, PA 18411.

All visitors are welcome to worship with us. **Worship services are held on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.** Child care is available. Communion is observed the first Sunday of every month.

If you do not attend a church in this area, we invite you to any and all of the events, programs, and worship services described in this newsletter. Please call the church office to arrange child care. Our sanctuary and Fellowship Hall are both handicapped accessible.

<b>Church Office</b>	(570) 586-6306
<b>Fax</b>	(570) 587-3784
<b>Web Page</b>	www.fpccs.org
<b>Pastor</b>	William G. Carter
<b>Administrative Assistant</b>	Nancy Owens
<b>Coordinator of Children &amp; Youth</b>	Jana Schillinger
<b>Treasurer</b>	Wayne Griffiths
<b>Editor</b>	Amanda Roberts
<b>Clerk of Session</b>	Beverly Bright
<b>Director of Music</b>	Frank Jones
<b>Director of Bells</b>	Richard Cochrane
<b>Organist</b>	Kay Ten Eyck
<b>Sexton</b>	Don Gross

### FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR THE MONTH ENDING JANUARY 31, 2023

<b>REVENUE</b>	
Budget	\$ 33,456
Actual Received	<u>46,832</u>
Difference	\$ 13,376

<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Budget	\$ 33,424
Actual Expenses	<u>31,420</u>
Difference	\$ 2,005

Result of operations \$ 15,412

<b>PLEDGE</b>	
Budget	\$ 29,370
Actually received	<u>41,536</u>
	\$ 12,166

2023 Per Capita assessment is \$42 per member.

## Board of Deacons

Care Team Ministry Coordinators are:

Deacon Meals	Erika Adams 570-878-2410
Time of Loss	Anne Rich 570-587-2802
Emergency Home Repairs and Maintenance	Joe Waters 570-351-3620
Deacon Driver	TBD

Please let the Board of Deacons Care Team Coordinators or the church office know if anyone is in need of care.

We're here to care for FPC members and friends and we count on all of you to let us know when help is needed. This is our ministry and our Christian privilege to care for you.

## From the Pastor

March 2023

Let me tell you about our Adult Education series for Lent, which will be offered on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. We will meet in person in Room 206 to reflect on what it means to welcome those who have been excluded from our circle of faith. The topic of the series is “Exclusion and Embrace,” based on an extraordinary book by Miroslav Volf.



Dr. Volf teaches theology at Yale Divinity School. A native of Croatia, he is all too familiar with persistent conflict and intractable conflict. He raises the question, “If God is love, how can we welcome those who differ from us, love our enemies, and work for reconciliation?” This is a worthy topic to explore, for Lent and for every day.

Each Wednesday, the class will discuss a brief video, many of which are available online on YouTube. We will post the links to those videos on our weekly e-mail. Here are the weekly topics for the series:

March 1 – “Before Embrace” – Miroslav Volf

- *What must happen before people who are estranged from one another can embrace?*

March 8 – “And Grace Will Lead Me Home: Inclusion and Evangelical Conscience” – Mark Achtemeier

- *What happens if a self-professed evangelical scholar befriends colleagues who are gay and lesbian? Will it change how he reads the scripture?*

March 15 – “Texts of Terror” – Bible study with Rev. Carter

- *Let’s give a closer look to the handful of texts that have been “used” to exclude gay and lesbian people from church membership and leadership. What do they really say – in context?*

March 22 – “Finding God in the Faith of Others” – Barbara Brown Taylor

- *If an Episcopalian priest becomes an interfaith college chaplain, how does she embrace people of other religions?*

March 29 - “I Didn’t Mean to Be Antisemitic” - Amy Jill Levine

- *An orthodox Jew who taught the New Testament at Vanderbilt Divinity School helps us to read the Bible without a Protestant bias. Or a Christian bias.*

April 5 – “Overcoming Conflict, Hatred, and Indifference” – Miroslav Volf

- *For Holy Week, we consider hatred – and how to overcome it.*

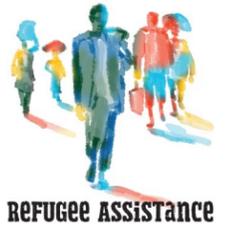
These are important issues for our divisive times. Come and join in a conversation which will stretch us, in the hope that we might know the mind – and heart – of Christ.

See you in church!

*Rev. Bill Carter*

## Introducing Welcome Corps

Have you ever seen on TV people in European countries welcoming refugees and think “That looks great. I wish I could do that!” Now we can. The United States has just started a new program, Welcome Corps, modeled after how many European countries welcome refugees.



Through the Welcome Corps, Americans can apply to form Private Sponsor Groups (PSGs) to welcome refugees into local communities and directly assist refugee newcomers as they build new lives in the United States.

As a private sponsor in the Welcome Corps, you will work with other members of your Private Sponsor Group to take on tasks like securing and furnishing initial housing, greeting the refugee newcomers at the airport, enrolling children in school, and helping adults to find employment. These shared acts of welcome make it easier for refugee newcomers to adjust to life in the United States and strengthen all of our communities.

While welcoming refugees through private sponsorship is a significant responsibility, you already have the most important skill you need to succeed—knowledge of your local community—and you will receive support from the Welcome Corps team throughout your sponsorship journey.

To learn more visit [welcomecorps.org](http://welcomecorps.org), or email Ginny O'Brien at [ginny8149@gmail.com](mailto:ginny8149@gmail.com).



## Community Meal

### Call for Volunteers Hickory Street Community Lunch

On Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> we will again prepare and serve a free lunch for the community at Hickory Street Presbyterian Church, accompanied by distribution of bags of groceries. This monthly program continues to fill a real need in that community, with requests for close to 150 meals and 35 bags of food. Volunteers will be needed for the following tasks, many of which can be pursued with children as a family activity.

#### Prepare the Main Dish (need 12 volunteers)

*We will be making a new Chicken a la King recipe and those who have tried it say it is delicious. Make in advance (in a pot) and transfer to an aluminum pan we'll supply. Then bring to the church the day before.*

#### Make a Dessert (need 12 volunteers)

*Prepare a dessert (to serve 10-12 people) of your own choosing that is easy to serve or package for to-go meals. Cookies, brownies, sheet cakes are all good ideas. Make in advance and bring to the church the day before.*

#### Serve the Meal (need 10 volunteers)

*Greet guests and seat them or take their take-out order, package desserts, heat and serve/package the hot meals, fill grocery bags, clean-up. Start at 9:00 am and finish at 1:00 pm at Hickory Street Presbyterian.*

#### Purchase Groceries for Food Bags (need 25-30 bags)

*Purchase and bring to the Narthex items on the “shopping list;” copies in the Narthex.*

#### Provide Financial Support

*If you can't join in the work, consider making a donation we can use to purchase needed groceries and other items for the meal. Put “Hickory Street” on the memo line of your check.*

Sign-Up Sheets for these tasks, the main dish recipe, grocery bag shopping lists, and a grocery collection box are available in the Narthex. This is very satisfying work; please consider getting involved.

### We Are an Earth-Care Congregation

After a two-year hiatus, we have re-established as an official PC USA Earth Care Congregation. In doing so, we join 10 other Presbyterian congregations across the state (and about 290 nationwide) that have publicly taken the following pledge:



#### The PC (USA) Earth Care Pledge (2010)

1. Our **worship** and discipleship will celebrate God's grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls us to cherish, protect, and restore the earth.
2. In **education**, we will seek learning and teaching opportunities to know and understand the threats to God's creation and the damage already inflicted. We will encourage and support each other in finding ways of keeping and healing the creation in response to God's call to earth-keeping, justice, and community.
3. Our **facilities** will be managed, maintained and upgraded in a manner that respects and cherishes all creation, human and non-human, while meeting equitably the needs of all people. In our buildings and on our grounds, we will use energy efficiently, conserve resources, and share what we have in abundance so that God's holy creation will be sustainable for all life and future generations.
4. Our **outreach** will encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores the vulnerable and degraded earth as well as oppressed and neglected people. We will be mindful that our personal and collective actions can positively or negatively affect our neighborhood, region, nation, and world. We will seek to achieve environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships.

As the next step in this process, we need to establish a group, which we will call our **Earth Care Corner**, to seek ways to grow our attention and action in each of the above four areas. This will launch as an email group for sharing ideas, news, questions, and concerns. If you would like to join, simply email Alan Baker at [abaker2@verizon.net](mailto:abaker2@verizon.net) and ask to be added to the list.

### Gifts for State Hospital Residents



It has been a longstanding function of the church's Women's Association to have a connection with the state hospital. For Easter this year we would like to supply them with some items. Suggestions are sunglasses, journals, boxed note cards, socks, easy word find books, adult coloring books, stuffed animals with no buttons. The dollar store is a good place to check out!

Donations may be left in the narthex... Any questions call Janet Dobson... 570-563-1887

### Highway Cleanup, April 8th



Our next highway cleanup will be held on Saturday morning, April 8th. We'll meet in the parking lot of the Methodist Church at the corner of the Morgan Highway and Grove Street at 9:00 am. Gloves, trash bags and safety vests will be supplied. A great chance to see all of the daffodils and tulips coming up just in time for Easter. For more information, contact Alan Baker at [abaker2@verizon.net](mailto:abaker2@verizon.net).

### Exploring Faith Practices

Join us after worship on **Sunday, March 12th**, for a time of food, fellowship, and learning. Families with children as well as congregants of all ages are invited

Christian Education



It's for life!

to come for a light lunch followed by a discussion of ways we can grow in faith, study God's word, and live out our beliefs. It will be a great opportunity to share fellowship and faith with our friends and family, so be sure to mark your calendars!

Also, please note other **upcoming CE events**:

Sunday, April 2 — Holy Week program

Sunday, May 28 — Pentecost celebration

### Thank You!

This year we collected

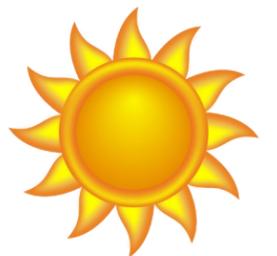
**\$534.14**

for the AEM Food Pantry through the Souper Bowl of Caring.



### Save the Date!

Attention all children, families, and volunteers!



Mark your calendars...

**VBS 2023**

will be held

**July 17 - 21**

Join us for an amazing Bible adventure filled with laughter, learning, and fun times with friends new and old!

Look for more information this spring.



### Lent: A Time for Reflection and Prayer

As we begin a new church season, we encourage you to take time individually and as a family to explore the meaning of Lent. Families can pick up a **Lent Bag** filled with devotions, activity and reflection suggestions, and more. We have versions available both for families with children and for those without. Please take only 1 bag per family. Bags will be available for pick up by Sunday, Feb. 19 or contact Jana to make arrangements for safe drop off at your home.

The Nursery, located in room 208 on the sanctuary level of the building, is open Sunday mornings from 9:40—11:10 a.m. for children ages 3 and younger. Our nursery caregiver is Heather Lyons, a member of this congregation.





**Wednesdays at First Presbyterian Church**

6:00 p.m. **Lenten Study** with Rev. Carter and Friends

**Beginning Wednesday March 1, our adult education series is “Exclusion and Embrace”** (see page 3). Each week the class will discuss a brief video that explores our relationship to those who have frequently been excluded from our circle of faith. These include gays and lesbians, the Jews, those who practice other religions, and people of other nations. Some of these videos are already posted online, so we will share those links in our weekly emails.

7:00 p.m. **Adult Choir** rehearses each week in the sanctuary  
 8:00 p.m. The **Bell Choir** will rehearse weekly in Fellowship Hall

**Other Opportunities for Learning**

**The Men’s Breakfast group** meets for donuts and Bible study on the first and third Thursdays of every month. They gather for conversation at 8:30 a.m. in the Session Room (206) and have their study from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. They normally discuss the scripture text for the following Sunday’s sermon.

The **Presbyterian Women** continue to meet monthly for a Bible study on the third Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Rev. Carter leads the Horizons Bible study, entitled “What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew’s Genealogy of Jesus.”

*Songs, Old and New*

Sunday, March 5, 2023 4:00 pm

Some of the area's top vocalists will perform on Sunday, March 5 at 4 pm at the church as part of our Arts at First Presbyterian 2022-23 concert series. The concert titled "An Afternoon of Song" will feature a program of art songs, arias, spirituals, show tunes and other types of vocal music. These talented singers will be accompanied by Dr. Rick Hoffenberg.

Outstanding soprano Dr. Jennifer Cowgill organized this program. She is Associate Professor of Voice at Marywood University and is in demand as a vocal pedagogy lecturer and clinician. She has performed a wide variety of repertoire in recital, concert, oratorio, opera and musical theater throughout the United States, England and Italy. Her most recent opera roles include Pamina in The Magic Flute, Rosalinda in Die Fledermaus, Zerlina in Don Giovanni and Hanna in The Merry Widow.



She will be joined by soprano Elise Mark, mezzo-sopranos Ellen Rutkowski and Abi Zieger, tenor Wes Poole, and bass Moses Andrade.

Dr Rick Hoffenberg is also on the faculty of Marywood University, where he is currently Associate Professor, Director of Choral Activities, and Co-Chair of the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance. He has spent the past 23 summers at Chautauqua Opera, where he is a pianist, coach, and assistant conductor. As a pianist, he was the state winner, division winner, and national finalist in the 1994 MTNA Wurlitzer Piano Competition.



The concert is open to the public free of charge, with a free-will offering taken to help defray the costs of the event. For more information, please call the church at 570-586-6306 or visit our website at [www.fpccs.org](http://www.fpccs.org).



**Joys**

**Sorrows**

**Lectionary**



- 7 Nina Schillinger
- 11 Sue Sill
- 12 Jim Thyren
- 16 Candy Ferrese
- 20 Chuck Woolever
- 23 Jacob Gilbert
- 27 Bonnie Plantholt
- 29 Nancy Post
- Bill Davis
- 31 Beverly Bright



With joy we announce the baptism of Eloise Ingram Taylor on February 5, 2023. She is the daughter of Allyson and Grant Taylor.



The sympathy of the congregation is sent to the family and friends of June Wech, who passed away recently in Wilmington, Delaware.

**Lectionary Readings**

**March 5, 2023**  
 Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm. 121;  
 Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

**March 12, 2023**  
 Exodus. 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11;  
 John 4:5-42

**March 19, 2023**  
 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23;  
 Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

**March 26, 2023**  
 Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11;  
 John 11:1-45



**Looking Ahead: Holy Week and Easter**

April 2	Palm Sunday Service	10 am
April 6	Maundy Thursday Service	7:30 pm
April 7	Good Friday Service	Noon-1 pm
April 9	Easter Sunday Service	10:00 am

**Flower Sign Up**

Start the new year by honoring loved ones, celebrations, and family events with a special floral arrangement to mark the occasion.

A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board in the hall next to Rev. Carter’s office.



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

*Worship every Sunday, 10 a.m., Sanctuary and on-line*



Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 12, 2023

**Board and Committee Meetings**

Session Meeting— Tuesday, March 14, 7 p.m., Room 206  
Board of Deacons— Tuesday, March 28, 7 p.m., Room 206

Building and Grounds— Thursday, March 2, 7 p.m., Room 209  
Christian Education—Thursday, March 2, 7 p.m., Room 206  
Mission and Justice—Tuesday, March 7, 7 p.m., Room 206  
Worship, Music and Arts - Thursday, March 9, 5 p.m., Room 206 and Zoom

**Service/Study/Fellowship Gatherings**

Men’s Breakfast and Bible Study – Thursday, March 9 and 23, 8:30 a.m., Room 206  
Exploring Faith Practices—Sunday, March 12, following worship, Fellowship Hall  
MBK Quilters—Tuesday, March 14 and 28, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall  
Women’s Circle Bible Study—Tuesday, March 21, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall  
Hickory Street Community Lunch—Saturday, March 25, see page 4 for details  
Adult Bible Study— Each Wednesday, 6 p.m., Room 206  
Adult Choir Rehearsal—Each Wednesday, 7 p.m., Choir Loft  
Bell Choir Rehearsal—Each Wednesday, 8 p.m., Fellowship Hall  
Prayer and Share - Each Wednesday, 10:30 a.m., Room 209

**Activities and Concerts**

The Arts Concert— Sunday, March 5, 4:00 p.m., Sanctuary

**Support Groups**

Many of our support groups have resumed in-person meetings. The schedule is below.  
• Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meets each morning at 7 AM in Room 206.  
• AlAnon meets on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. and Thursdays at 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall  
• Overeaters Anonymous (OA) meets in room 210: Sundays at 3 p.m., Tuesdays at 6 p.m., Thursdays at 9:30 a.m., Saturdays at 9:45 a.m.

**Deadline for the next Presbyter** is Friday, March 17 with anticipated mailing date of March 29.



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
300 School Street  
Clarks Summit, PA 18411-1536

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Permit No. 30  
PAID  
Clarks Summit PA

**DATED MATERIAL**  
Return Service Requested



**6½” Pots of Tulips will be ordered for Easter Morning.**

**----- Easter Tulip order form -----**

Price is \$9.00 per pot. **Deadline is March 15**  
Checks are payable to “First Presbyterian Church”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tulip pots : \_\_\_\_\_ @\$9.00 each Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dedication: In honor/In memory of  
\_\_\_\_\_

I will pick up my flowers \_\_\_\_\_

Please give to a shut-in \_\_\_\_\_

