



# The Presbyter

January 2025

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit



## Clarks Summit Festival of Ice

January 24-27, 2025

*Join us for a winter weekend of art, music, and food*

Free activities for children and youth

The Chili Café is a great deal for a hot lunch on a cold day.

- Ice Sculpture on display just outside the entrance to the sanctuary
- Photography and Art Show in the Session Room most of the weekend
- Friday, January 24, 6-7 p.m. Guitarist Roy Williams (right) in the sanctuary
- Saturday, January 25, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Chili Cafe in Fellowship Hall with entertainment by piano students of Michelle Triaca
- Saturday, January 25, 1-2 p.m. Jeremy Lewan, (right) WNEP-TV meteorologist, presentation on clouds
- Saturday, January 25, 2-3 p.m. Drum Circle led by Cheryl Mozdian in the sanctuary.



Can you help? Karen White is looking for volunteers to provide a crockpot of chili or work at the Chili Cafe. Call her at (570) 575-7005 or see her at coffee hour on Sunday.

Our Arts Series is supported by grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Lackawanna County Community Arts and Culture department, and by individual contributions. Thank you to our donors.

## It's a new year for Per Capita

One of the improvements in our church's finances has come from YOU. Each year, our congregation is responsible for a fair share of the administrative costs of our national denomination. We ask for your help in contributing toward this cost, which our church is obligated to pay. You have begun to fill the gap.

Last year, our Per Capita cost was **\$ 19,320**. Our church members generously contributed **\$ 6,002** as of 11/30.

For 2025, our Per Capita cost is **\$ 46.10** for each church member. Can you contribute your household's share today? Thank you!

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### Notes from the Church Office

**The Annual Meeting** of the Congregation and Corporation of First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit will be held on Sunday, February 9, 2025 following worship.

**Annual Reports** are requested from all session committees, boards, and program staff.

Please forward your reports to the church office by Tuesday, January 21 at [office@fpccs.org](mailto:office@fpccs.org)

### Thank you!

To all who have assisted in so many ways with work in the church office, and beyond, THANK YOU!

I'm sure you are familiar with the expression, "It takes a Village" . . . Well, it takes "a congregation" to keep up with this lively bunch. Just wait until you see the various annual reports.

FPCCS is an exciting place to be!

Nancy Owens, administrative assistant

The Presbyterian deadline for the February 2025 issue is January 17.

The Presbyterian 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>	<b>(570) 586-6306</b>
<b>Fax</b>	<b>(570) 587-3784</b>
<b>Web Page</b>	<b>www.fpccs.org</b>
<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>	Michael Lambert

### FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR THE MONTH ENDING November 30, 2024

<b>REVENUE</b>	
Budget	\$377,847
Actual Received	<u>346,334</u>
Difference	\$( 31,513)

<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Budget	\$377,463
Actual Expenses	<u>373,883</u>
Difference	\$3,580

Result of operations (\$27,549)

<b>PLEDGE</b>	
Budget	\$ 340,997
Actually received	<u>312,409</u>
	(\$ 28,588)

Per capita assessment for 2025 is \$46.10 per member.

### Board of Deacons

Care Team Ministry Coordinators are:

Moderator	Grace Farrell
Deacon Meals	Diana Pope-Albright
Ushers	John Conklin
Deacon Driver	Jack Pittman

Church phone number is 570-586-6306

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

Happy New Year! As 2025 begins, you and I are part of a “new” presbytery: Mountain Laurel Presbytery. Wait a second. Did somebody just stifle a yawn? Well, let me tell you why this is important. Next month, I will tell you how we got to this point.

Presbyterians are Christians who belong to one another. We have discerned a covenantal approach to the Christian faith. Through Jesus Christ, God has established a relationship with us (the word for that is “covenant”). Through that relationship, relationships with one another have been established. That is the genius of Presbyterian governance: the understanding that we participate in the Christian life together.

To flesh this out, we gather together for decisions and mission. The governing assumption is that all of us have wisdom, even if it’s partial. If we band together, a deeper consensus forms. Resources can be pooled. Leadership will be broadly based, and less captive to an individual’s personal magnetism. We are stronger together than if we are alone.

Granted, our American culture has been polluted by individualism. Whether it’s the old myth of the go-it-alone cowboy or the idolization of celebrities who are famous for being famous, there is a toxic notion that “I alone know everything,” that “I am the center of the universe.” Churches can buy into that stuff when their preachers buy into that stuff. Hence, the proliferation of denominations – and now “independent churches.” They splinter over infinitesimal points of theology, the outsized personality of their leaders, or a self-imposed seclusion from the real issues of human beings. The result? They coalesce around the presumption they are correct about all things. They have long ceased to do the harder work of talking to those who see things differently. Fractures form. Divisions separate. Is God honored by this?

Presbyterians believe in working together. That doesn’t mean that all of them do, but our belief is that there is more wisdom within a group than there is in an individual. A group can be misguided, even wrong. Many human decisions are tainted by self-interest. Sometimes a prophet is called upon to point this out. Yet we never give up on traveling Christ’s road together. As a lifelong Presbyterian, my mind and heart have been enlarged as the family of faith has helped me understand God’s comprehensive activity and care in all things. I am not the solitary Christian I am tempted to be – because I belong to the Presbyterians.

We play out our values by the way we organize. A presbytery is a covenantal association of congregations in a regional area. They assent to an historical understanding of what Christians believe and do. They honor diversity while insisting on unity. They pursue policies and practices that benefit the largest number of people. They hold one another accountable. They make hard decisions that a singular congregation cannot make on its own. They offer personal support from the larger group. They share the mission money around. In all things, they seek the mind of Christ.

The news is that the Presbytery of Lackawanna (**us**) has begun a merger with the Presbytery of Lehigh (**them**) to become the Mountain Laurel Presbytery (**we**). It’s a long process which I’ll sketch briefly next month. Yet it is a good example of who we are and what, by God’s grace, we aspire to become. I will tell you about it in our February newsletter.

*Rev. Bill*

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## Wednesday Evening Opportunities

**Adult Education** meets on Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m., Room 206. Our Bible study in January and February is called "Wintering in Corinth." Many of the lessons will coincide with the upcoming Sunday sermons. We will explore what it means to be the church. Who are we? How does God work through us? How do we treat one another? What should we consider when we worship together? What is our shared hope in Christ?

The leadership team will include Rev. Bill, Michael Thompson, and Charlie Pinches. All are welcome. That includes Bible Beginners (which includes most of us)!

**Adult Choir** rehearses at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. **Bell Choir** rehearses at 8:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

## Additional Adult Education Opportunities

*Presbyterian Women – 2024-25 Horizon Bible Study*

*Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation*

by Patricia K. Tull

Presbyterian Women's Bible Study Lesson Five: Air Quality

Tuesday, January 21, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

**Main Idea:** the wind itself often signals a holy moment, and is related to both our breath and God's, both our spirit and God's.



From the outset of Scripture's story of life, air has been associated with God, who breathes life into every human and animal. Lesson 5 discusses air quality issues, specifically those related to certain types of animal farming; vehicle emissions (especially ozone and carbon monoxide); sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide from burning coal, oil, and gas; and lead smelting. It especially raises awareness of dangers from factories and refineries along Cancer Alley in Louisiana.

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**Men's Breakfast and Bible Study** meets for donuts and Bible study on the first and third Thursday 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 are working through the Acts of the Apostles with Rev. Bill. All men in the church family are always welcome.

## Lectionary Readings

### January 5: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas

Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20;  
Ephesians 1: 3-14; John 1: (1-9) 10-18

### January 12: Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17;  
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

### January 19: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10;  
1 Corinthians 12: 1-11; John 2: 1-11

### January 26: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19;  
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

## Christian Education: Growing in Faith and Love

**Bible Time:** Hear Bible stories told just for our young children during worship. We invite any kids age 4 to approx. grade 4 to join us after the anthem for learning and fun; we will return for prayers and the conclusion of service. **January stories** will include epiphany (the wise men), baptism, temptation, and God's good news.



**We Worship Together series:** A 30-minute program held after worship for children through grade 6. We Worship Together examines questions we have about church practices and traditions. Each family will receive a book to take home related to the topic discussed. Have you ever wondered what exactly baptism is and why we do it? Our next program in the series will be held on **January 12** to learn about the sacrament of **baptism**.

**We Believe:** Faith foundations for our pre-confirmation age youth is a mix of Bible 101, faith questions, and church basics to help prepare children in grade 6 and up for their confirmation journey. This curriculum, "*We Believe*" is a combination of discussions, activities, and self-study.

Our next meeting is January 19 after worship (3rd Sunday of each month). Contact Jana if you'd like to participate. More information and current assignments can be found on our class website: <https://sites.google.com/view/fpcs-we-believe/>



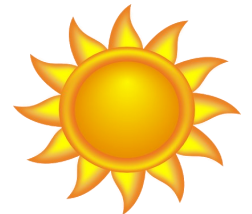
### Souper Bowl Sunday

Sunday, February 9 isn't just the Big Game...it's a big opportunity to help hungry neighbors in need!

Remember to bring your donation to church on Souper Bowl Sunday or check [fpcs.org](http://fpcs.org) for online donation information.



### Save the Date!



Attention all children, families, and volunteers! Mark your calendars...

**VBS 2025** will be held **July 14 - 18**

Join us this summer for an amazing Bible adventure filled with laughter, learning, and fun times with friends new and old! Look for more information this spring.

### LIFT: Living In Faith Together

Shake off the snow and join us after worship on **Sunday, February 2** for a meal and intergenerational program. Families with children as well as congregants of all ages are invited. Enjoy a meal, Bible reading and discussion, and activity. It's a great opportunity to share fellowship and faith with our friends and family.

Also, please save the dates for our next **LIFT** programs:

**Sunday, March 9 (Lent)** and **Sunday, April 13 (Holy Week)**





## Mission and Justice Committee

As we end 2024, our final local and international disbursements for the year included:

\$700 to NEPA Youth Shelter, Scranton (for the refurbishing of their new building)

\$250 to St Joseph's Center Baby and Children's Pantry, Scranton

\$150 to Infant Care Program, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Scranton

\$400 to Catharine McAuley Center, Scranton

\$500 to the Pygmy Ministry, Kellerman Foundation, in Uganda

We give thanks to the generosity of our congregation!

## Sudan – World's Forgotten War

Sudan, Africa's third largest nation, has been engulfed in civil war since fighting erupted in April 2023 between the nation's military, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and a paramilitary group known as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

While the world focuses on the expanding mid-east crises in Gaza and Lebanon, and the Ukraine–Russia conflict, Sudan has been deteriorating into the world's worst humanitarian crises, including the world's worst famine in 40 years.

This represents an historic failure in the global aid system, with the international appeal for funds falling short by 60%.

The mass suffering is unimaginable, with an estimated 755,000 people facing famine. Another 25.6 million people, or nearly half of the country's population, are facing acute hunger. 10.5 million people have been displaced, with approximately half of those being children.

The United Nations has documented an alarming rise in sexual assault and rape on the part of the largely male combatants, the vast majority of them being RSF members. Asylum seekers have reported experiencing or witnessing abduction, assault, rape, or other forms of gender based violence. An almost inconceivable number of women are facing this gender based violence, estimated at 6.7 million.

At the U.N. General Assembly in September 2024, the U.S. ambassador, referring to Sudan, referenced "Compassion Collapse", defined as the human tendency to turn away from mass suffering. This article is being written to address this failure, and hopefully to heighten our awareness of this increasingly dire situation.

The Mission and Justice Committee has donated funds to the Presbyterian Hunger Program, to be directed to Sudan. In so doing, we pray for acknowledgment and recognition of the plight of the Sudanese people by the world community, with a response that is both constructive and comprehensive. During this holiday season, let us be ever mindful of our own good fortunes, and in turn, let us be ever mindful of the needs of others less fortunate, many of whom suffer in silence.

## From the Generosity Team

Your gift to the FPCCS Endowment Fund supports a thriving community of faith, one that makes a difference in the lives of our church family, our neighbors, and the world.



Beginning with a \$5,000 contribution in 2019, the Endowment Fund has grown to a value of approximately \$170,000. In 2024, the Fund distributed income of \$5,619 to the church, which was used to cover a portion of our general operating expenses. The Generosity Team encourages our parishioners and friends to make generous contributions to the Endowment Fund to generate even greater earnings to help meet current and future expenses. Consistent growth of the Endowment Fund will help to put our congregation on a stronger, more stable financial footing.

Our fund is managed by The Presbyterian Foundation. For over two hundred years, the Foundation's funds have created long-term, sustainable value and income in perpetuity for churches and donors. The Foundation currently manages over 7,000 permanent endowment funds and 3,500 charitable gift vehicles, totaling over \$1 billion. It distributes over \$100 million annually for mission and ministry.

There are many ways to give:

- **Cash:** checks written to the FPCCS Endowment Fund during a donor's lifetime
- **Securities:** a gift of appreciated securities may allow a donor to claim a charitable contribution deduction, avoid income taxes on capital gains, and reduce the size of their estate
- **Bequest:** may be written to give a stated amount, a percentage of the donor's estate, or a residual amount after estate expenses and other bequests have been deducted
- **Endowing a Pledge:** for example, a gift to the Fund of \$100,000 with a return of 5% would perpetually fund the donor's current annual pledge of \$5,000
- **Life Insurance:** name the FPCCS Endowment Fund as the beneficiary on a life insurance policy or transfer ownership of the policy to the Endowment Fund
- **Retirement plans:** obtain an IRA or 401(k)/403(b) change of beneficiary form and indicate the amount or percentage of retirement assets that are designated for the Endowment Fund



### January 2025 Volunteer Corner

Formalized in 2001, the FPC Arts Series has brought many arts enthusiasts (both community and FPC members) through our sanctuary doors. Audiences have been treated to a variety of experiences: storytelling with Dennis Dewey, a visit from sculptor Nena Bryans, juggling with Rob Smith, poetry readings by Glenn McLaughlin and Bill Leety, art exhibits... and the music; so much great music! The Young Geezers, Cornet Band, Paragon Ragtime Orchestra, Presbybop, chamber music, organ recitals, bell choir festivals and the impactful Considering Matthew Shepherd just to mention a few.

We have enjoyed it all as we simply sit, relax and enjoy the performances.

The Music, Worship and Arts Committee is active in the planning, but the bulk of the work falls into the capable hands of volunteers John Weiss and Dick Cochrane. What does this behind-the-scenes work entail? So much: Booking the performers, checking community calendars to ensure there are no conflicts, handling contracts, writing grants, initiating fundraising efforts, working in cooperation with Ice Festival activities, planning publicity, preparing the sanctuary as requested by the performers and setting up the session room for the annual art exhibit, printing programs and brochures, keeping track of finances. IT'S A LOT!

So if you're among the folks who appreciate the Arts program please take the time to thank John and Dick, the Arts co-chairs, for all their hard work.

# Joys

# Sorrows

# Prayers

## JANUARY Birthdays

- 1 Jessie Davis
- 5 Rylee Yankow
- 11 Peggy Lyons
- 16 Dana Miller
- 17 Margaret Reese  
John Weiss
- 21 Connie Weiss
- 26 Char Lyon
- 28 Briar Woodley
- 29 Greg Yankow

### Holiday Angel Tree



Thank you to all who supported our angel tree project. Through your generosity 69 pairs of pajamas were delivered to four area Head Start centers.

Christian Education and Growth Committee

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### Christmas Clean-up

A big thank you to all who helped undecorate the church on Sunday, January 5. The church was quickly returned to normal, and we enjoyed a soup lunch together. Everyone's willingness to help was most appreciated! —Worship, Music and Art committee



Alexis Connell Davis



Sympathy of the congregation is extended to Karen White upon the passing of her sister, Dawn, on December 14, 2024.

### Thank You

The Garnecki and Sekol families want to thank all of you for the cards, love, support and comfort you showed our family, and for the tremendous outpouring of love for Joanie. And a special thank you to all the Deacons and volunteers who made the day extra special, and did it twice in the same day!



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The 2025 flower calendar is hanging on the bulletin board in the hall. If you would like to contribute flowers for the sanctuary on Sunday mornings, please write your name on the list and you will be contacted.

## January Prayer List for soon to be united Lackawanna and Lehigh Presbyteries

- First Presbyterian Church Allentown
- Slate Belt Presbyterian Church
- Camptown Community Church
- Dunmore Presbyterian Church
- East Stroudsburg Presbyterian Church
- Stella Presbyterian Church



For more information on our Presbyteries, or for these individual churches, go to [polackawanna.org](http://polackawanna.org) or [lehighpresbytery.org](http://lehighpresbytery.org)



## *MARK YOUR CALENDAR*

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

### **Board and Committee Meetings**

**Session Meeting**— Sunday, January 12, 2025, 11:15 a.m., Room 206

**Board of Deacons**—Tuesday, January 28, 7:00 p.m., Room 206

**Building and Grounds**— Thursday, January 9, 7 p.m., Room 209

**Christian Education**—Thursday, January 9, 7 p.m., Room 206

**Mission and Justice**—Tuesday, January 7, 7 p.m., Room 206

**Worship, Music and Arts** - Thursday, January 9, 5:30 p.m., Room 206

### **Service/Study/Fellowship Gatherings**

**Men's Breakfast and Bible Study** – Thursday, January 2 and 16, 8:30 a.m., Room 206

**MBK Quilters**—Tuesday, January 14 and 28, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

**Presbyterian Women's Bible Study**—Tuesday, January 21, 10:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall

**Prayer and Share** - Each Wednesday, 10:30 a.m., Room 209

**Adult Education**—Each Wednesday, 5:45 p.m., Room 206

**Adult Choir**—Each Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., in the Sanctuary

**Bell Choir**—Most Wednesdays, 8:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

### **Support Groups**

We welcome members of the following support groups to our building on a regular basis, as scheduled:

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meets each morning at 7 AM in Room 206.
- AlAnon meets on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. in room 206.
- Overeaters Anonymous (OA) meets in room 210: Sundays at 3 p.m., Tuesdays at 6 p.m., and Saturdays at 9:45 a.m.

**Deadline for the February 2025 Presbyterian: Friday, January 17, 2024.**

**Anticipated mailing date January 29**



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.



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

300 School Street

Clarks Summit, PA 18411-1536

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Permit No. 30  
**P A I D**  
Clarks Summit PA

**DATED MATERIAL**

**Return Service Requested**



**Clarks Summit Festival of Ice activities**  
**Winter weekend of art, music, and food**  
**January 24-27, 2025**