



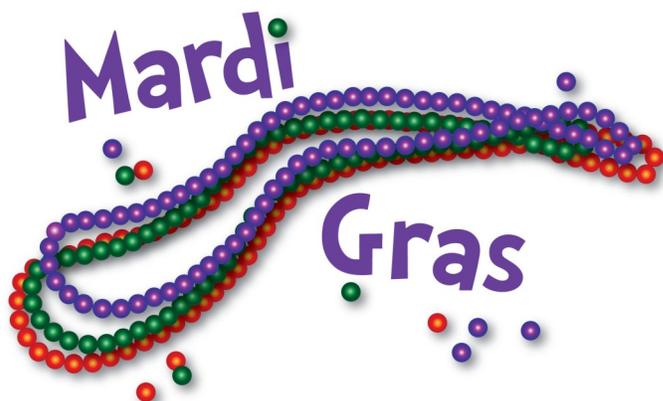
The Presbyter

February 2025

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit



Next Arts Event
Sunday, March 16
4 p.m.



The Lyric Consort presents Irish music for St Patrick's Day. The Lyric Consort is an *a cappella* vocal group led by Chris Gallo that was founded by Dr. Alan Baker in 1993 and performs beautiful vocal music for unaccompanied voices.

Join us for worship on **Sunday, March 2**, as we gather to the sounds of New Orleans music. The South Abington Stompers will join us to defrost our hearts on a chilly day.

Other remaining events in the 2024-25 Arts at First Presbyterian concert series include:

- Saturday, April 5 at 7 pm-Seraph Brass- award-winning female brass quintet
- Sunday, May 18 at 4 pm-Jazz concert with the Presbybop Quintet

Special musicians will include Tony "Big Foot" Marino on bass, Jumpin' Jeff Leas on trumpet, Swingin' Tyler Dempsey on drums, Magic Mike Carbone on soprano sax, and Wigglin' William on piano. Leading the Saints Parade will be our grand marshal, Francois Jones.

The concerts are open to the public free of charge, with an offering taken to defray the event costs.



We welcome contributions to the Arts Series. Checks are payable to First Presbyterian Church (Please write "Arts Series" in the memo block.)

This is always a lively and fun day - the last gasp of joy before the beginning of Lent. Here is your advance notice. Don't miss it!

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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 11/30/24.

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 Session Meeting, January 12, 2025

Session approved the Annual Omnibus Bill, which includes:

- Elect Heather Acker as the president of the corporation.
- Elect Beverly Bright as the clerk of session.
- Elect Wayne Griffiths as the church treasurer.
- Approve the serving of the Lord's Supper normally on the first Sunday of each month and special services.
- Authorize all ordained elders and deacons to serve the Lord's Supper with the pastor, as needed.
- Approve the administrative assistant as the keeper of the official church calendar.
- Approve the "Souper Bowl" Offering on February 9, 2025 to benefit the Abington Food Pantry. Volunteers will be collecting this special offering as you leave the sanctuary.

Chris Norton, Chair of People in Ministry will be initiating the Nominating Committee process. If anyone has a name to suggest for the committee or for the office of elder and/or deacon, please give it to Chris at your earliest convenience or put it in the Offering Plate when it is passed on Sunday.

Session elected John Young as elder commissioner to Lackawanna Presbytery, and Briar Woodley as alternate commissioner.

Beverly Bright, Clerk of Session

The Presbyterian deadline for March issue is February 14

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.

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Church Office | (570) 586-6306 |
| Fax | (570) 587-3784 |
| Web Page | www.fpcs.org |
| Pastor | William G. Carter |
| Administrative Assistant | Nancy Owens |
| Coordinator of Children & Youth | Jana Schillinger |
| Treasurer | Wayne Griffiths |
| Editor | Open |
| Clerk of Session | Beverly Bright |
| Director of Music | Frank Jones |
| Director of Bells | Richard Cochrane |
| Organist | Kay Ten Eyck |
| Sexton | Michael Lambert |

FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR THE MONTH ENDING December 31, 2024

REVENUE

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Budget | \$412,197 |
| Actual Received | <u>391,605</u> |
| Difference | (\$ 20,592) |

EXPENSES

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Budget | \$411,778 |
| Actual Expenses | <u>411,642</u> |
| Difference | \$ 136 |

Result of operations (\$20,036)

PLEDGE

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Budget | \$ 371,997 |
| Actually received | <u>353,318</u> |
| Difference | (\$ 18,679) |

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.

Happy February!

About three years ago, a chance conversation created a lot of work for me. I had called the Rev. Rhonda Kruse, executive for Lehigh Presbytery, about a pastoral matter concerning a minister. The matter was small and quickly resolved, but the conversation went on a while. She noted that I began my ministry in a congregation near Allentown. "So, you know both presbyteries pretty well," she said. "What would you think about a merger?"



My information about Lehigh was vastly outdated, yet I have friends down there. And there have been informal conversations for sixty years about uniting Lackawanna and Lehigh. For a number of years, the Rev. Bob London (AKA Nancy's husband) had served both presbyteries as a Christian Education consultant, so we shared him in common. Twenty-five years ago, both presbyteries tried to create a new congregation in Tobyhanna, near the boundary between the two; the project didn't work out but friendships were formed.

I said to Rhonda, "The way I see it, geographic distances are the greatest barrier." Nose to tail, Lackawanna comprises seven counties in northeastern Pennsylvania, with Lehigh stretching for another seven counties (with one partial overlap). It's a long way from Troy to Reading to Hawley, with few direct lines between them. Yet it was mid-pandemic, and we had experienced modest success with Zoom and online meetings.

Rhonda recruited me and three other pastors to begin talking. We had no authority, but we did share a deep interest in a more effective approach to church governance. Each of our two presbyteries has about seven full-time ministers. Many of the congregations were (and are) shrinking before our eyes. There weren't enough visible volunteers to populate the presbytery committees mandated by the Book of Order. Worst of all, any true connection between the regional Presbyteries and some of their churches had come unglued.

Those monthly conversations sparked a movement. The movement has expanded. A tagline was identified, "Better Together." Now both presbyteries have voted to move ahead with an official merger of Mountain Laurel Presbytery. After Rhonda's retirement, a new presbytery executive, the Rev. Denise Pass, has been called to serve the soon-to-be united presbytery. Plans are moving ahead.

Why does it take so long? Because we are Presbyterians. We must meet, discuss, and welcome every voice. We must discern a future together, not because a single leader directs a change. Also, two different organizations have different volunteer leaders, different budgets, different bylaws, and different special funds squirreled away; all of these must be consolidated and unified. What's more, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has strict laws governing non-profit organizations. We are thankful to God for the work of our own attorney Dave Brown, who continues to offer his sage advice in negotiating the waters. By the grace of God, Mountain Laurel Presbytery will be official by November of this year.

The primary take-away is this: church work is all about relationships. Relationships must be built between strangers, friendships formed, trust built, and resources shared. There is no fast track for these important steps. At every level, our little movement has welcomed all who wish to take part. There are no secrets. But there is positive energy. These days, that's a wonderful thing. And the new friendships are priceless.

Rev. Bill

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 includes 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 Six: Climate Change

Tuesday, February 18, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Main Idea: Scripture teaches us to listen to prophets who warn of threats, avoid complacency and self-concern, and participate with joy in the work God gives us to do.

More than 50% of U.S. citizens now recognize that climate change is real, and much of it was caused by humans. Present-day prophets have struggled to get the word out in the U.S. This isn’t a new problem. The prophet Jeremiah warned of “looming dangers.” (For this he was charged with treason and imprisoned.) We each have a part to play in this crisis. Our congregations working together can have an impact in reducing carbon pollution ourselves and spreading the word to others. **Let’s talk about it!**

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

February 2: 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6;
1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

February 9: 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13); Psalm 138;
1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

February 16: 6th Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1;
1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

February 23: 7th Sunday after Epiphany

Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40;
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

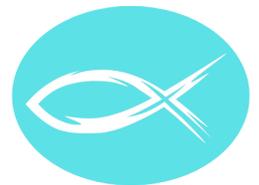
Christian Education: Growing in Faith and Love

Bible Time: Hear Bible stories told just for our young children during worship. We invite any children 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. **February stories** will include spreading the good news, calling the disciples, blessings, and God's way to live.



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. Why do we have to get ready for 40 days before Easter? What are we supposed to do during that time? Our next program in the series will be held on **March 2** to learn about the season of Lent.

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 **February 16** after worship (3rd Sunday of each month). More information and current assignments can be found on our class website: <https://sites.google.com/view/fpccs-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 fpccs.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**

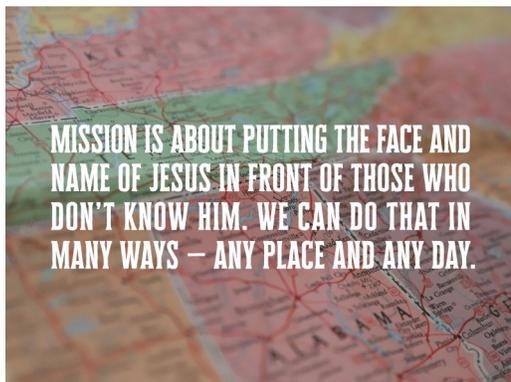
Join us this summer for an amazing Bible adventure filled with laughter, learning, and fun times with friends new and old! Look for more information this spring.

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 people of all ages are invited. Enjoy a meal, Bible reading and discussion, and activity. It's a great opportunity to share fellowship, friendship, and faith with friends and family. Rev. Bill will lead a conversation on "**Light in the Winter: Spiritual Practices to Beat the Blahs.**"

Also, please save the dates for our next LIFT programs: **Sunday, March 9 (Lent)** and **Sunday, April 13 (Holy Week)**





Mission and Justice Committee

In gratitude to all of you for your generous contributions to this year's Give a Gift to a Stranger Program during Advent! Thanks to you, we collected the following: \$300-\$350 to Appalachian Service Project from their chocolate sale, \$587 to the Pygmy Ministry in Uganda for the purchase of mattresses, pots, and more (see photo below),

\$645 added to our education fund for the Haitian children overseen by our friend YaYa, and 46 gifts for 23 children of 9 newly arrived immigrant families. Thanks to the Deacons for their purchase of gift cards for 20 adults of these immigrant families. It takes a village and we are grateful!



The pygmies receiving their mattresses.

Church Directory

In 2019 we started developing our Online Church Directory with the intention of printing directories once we had a sufficient number of family pictures submitted.

And we all know what happened in 2020!

Many of you use the directory online but we would also like to have a professionally printed church directory.

We are planning to take pictures during Fellowship Hour through the rest of January and February for those who would like their picture updated or who never had a photo submitted for the directory. You may also submit your own photo if you prefer.



Please speak with JoAnn Hall or Jeanne DeVirgilis if you would like to have a photo taken or if you have a photo you would like to submit or have questions regarding using the online directory.

Care Packages



Care Packages to loved ones

The Deacons are once again preparing to send care packages to your college, postgraduate, or military loved ones! Please send your loved one's name and address to Grace Farrell, either by email: office@fpccs.org or by phone (570) 586-6306. Please make sure to provide their current and complete address. Thank you.

From the Generosity Team



Recall this account from Mark's Gospel, chapter 12: He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

The Biblical account of the poor widow illustrates that an impoverished person living in difficult economic times still had the faith that led her to give generously to the Lord's work. She gave all that she had, believing that God would both provide for her and use her gifts to advance His kingdom.

Your contributions allow the church to compensate our dedicated and loyal staff, provide meaningful worship experiences, offer rich and varied opportunities for Christian education, sponsor a variety of fellowship activities and community events, help those in need, and maintain our building.

Each fall, we hold Worship Through Service weekend, an enormously successful series of projects that benefit so many people throughout our area. That event is appropriately titled because it mentions two of the most important things that we do as a church community: worship and service. Through the spoken word and music, we worship and praise God for who He is: the timeless one who created the universe, sustains us in this earthly life, and offers the promise of eternal life through belief in the resurrection power of His Son, Jesus Christ. Through our service, we express our gratitude to God by helping those in need to know a better life.



Volunteer Corner

A few heartfelt thank you's this month

...**To Margie Reese**, who has been our flower coordinator since 2014. Margie is retiring from this volunteer position. We appreciate the important role she has played in both honoring and remembering our members while adding beauty to our sanctuary each Sunday.

...**To the team of Karis and Rebekah Naeher** who have agreed to take on this responsibility!

...**To the volunteers** have been willing to step in to help with various needs (often at the last moment) as we deal with winter weather and the germs that accompany it.

...**To the food pantry volunteers** who braved the cold and wind last month to unload the truck and run food to clients' cars.

...**To Amanda Roberts** who has been our Presbyterian Editor for the past seven years. Amanda is leaving this role ...and leaving us with big shoes to fill! If you have knowledge of MS Publisher, this position may be up your alley. The articles are submitted to the editor by MS Word or compatible program, so there's a cut and paste process. There's also some content editing, but the office and pastor provide proofing and other support.

If you have interest in the Presbyterian Editor position, Nancy Owens would be happy to talk with you!

Joys

Sorrows

Prayers



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Jan Thyren
- 2 Jeff McLaughlin
- 4 JoAnn Hall
- 6 Chris Shane Steven Sloneker
- 10 Tabbi Miller-Scandle
- 17 Holly Shane
- 19 Melba Fialko
- 21 Rev. Bill Carter
- 25 Erika Adams Victoria Jeschke
Susan Kelly Thomas Heinze
- 26 Diane Smith
- 28 Diane Cole Gayle Hamilton

Thank You

Thank you to the Deacons and members of our congregation for the food, prayers, cards, and fellowship during my recent recovery. I hope to see you in church soon!

Bob Sproul



February Liturgists

- February 2 Will Beichler
- February 9 Briar Woodley & Jillian Shane
- February 16 John Conklin
- February 23 Barbara Norton



Stan and Gwynne Gilbert
will celebrate 60 years of marriage
February 6, 2025!
Continued Blessings and Joy
to You.



The 2025 flower calendar is hanging on the bulletin board next to Rev. Bill's office. If you would like to contribute flowers for the sanctuary on a Sunday morning, please write your name on the calendar and you will be contacted.

February 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



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

Congregational, Board, and Committee Meetings

Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation— Sunday, February 9, 11:15 a.m. Fellowship Hall

Session Meeting— Tuesday, **March 11**, 7 p.m., Room 206 (no meeting in February)

Board of Deacons—Tuesday, February 25, 7 p.m., Room 206

Building and Grounds— Thursday, February 6, 7 p.m., Room 209

Christian Education—Thursday, February 6, 7 p.m., Room 206

Finance— Thursday, February 6, 5 p.m., Room 210

Mission and Justice—Tuesday, February 4, 7 p.m., Room 206

Worship, Music and Arts—Thursday, February 6, 5:30 p.m., Room 206

Service/Study/Fellowship Gatherings

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

Bible Time—Each Sunday following the anthem for children age 4 through approx. grade 4

Living in Faith Together (LIFT)—February 2, after worship, Fellowship Hall (for all ages, see page 5)

Men's Breakfast and Bible Study – Thursday, February 6 and 20, 8:30 a.m., Room 206

MBK Quilters—Tuesday, February 11 and 25, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

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

Presbyterian Women's Bible Study—Tuesday, February 18, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Senior Game Group—Thursday, February 20, 2 p.m., Fellowship Hall

We Believe—Sunday, February 16 after worship, for pre-confirmation students (3rd Sunday of each month)

We Worship Together—Sunday, March 2 after worship for children through grade 6

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 March 2025 Presbyterian is Friday, February 14.

Anticipated mailing date is Wednesday, February 26.



NURSERY is OPEN!

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

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ANNUAL MEETING

Plan to attend the Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the congregation and corporation of First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit has been called for **Sunday, February 9, 2025** following the worship service in Fellowship Hall.

In keeping with the Super Bowl theme, we invite you to bring “football snacks” to share: chips and dips, nachos, wings, and your favorite treat.