



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

300 School Street
Clarks Summit, PA 18411-1536

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The Presbyter

December 2022

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

Advent and Christmas at FPCCS
Tis the Season—Devotions, Worship, Activities



Advent bags for our households have been prepared by our Christian Education Committee and are available now.

An Advent devotional booklet (in print and on the website as a PDF) features the “best of” reflections from the past five years.

Our Give a Gift to a Stranger mission program begins on the first Sunday in Advent, November 27. See page 5 for more information.

On Wednesday evenings, our 6:00 p.m. Adult Study is “Advent in Narnia,” based on the C.S. Lewis book, “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.”

An intergenerational Advent program will take place on Sunday, December 4, following worship. See page 7 for more details.

The C.E. committee will hold a Parent’s Night Out, Friday, December 9, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. See page 7.

Brass Concert and Sing-A-Long by the Ringgold Band on Friday, December 16 at 7:00 p.m.

Blue Christmas Service will be held in person and broadcast online on Tuesday, December 20, 7:00 pm.

On Christmas Eve, there will be a simple Christmas pageant at 4:00 p.m., a choral Lessons and Carols at 8:00 p.m., and a Jazz Communion at 11:00 p.m. All will be in person and broadcast online.

Worship will be held on Christmas Day and New Year’s Day at 10:00 a.m. Both are Sundays.

Ringgold Band

Christmas Brass Concert and Sing-Along

Traditional and Modern Brass Christmas Favorites

Friday, December 16 7:00 PM

Clarks Summit Presbyterian Church

Free concert sponsored by a grant from the Lackawanna County Arts and Culture Department



Welcome New Members

On November 20, we welcomed the following as new church members.

All were members of the 2022 Confirmation Class:

- Liam Farrell
- Gavin Kareha
- Austin Lyons
- Diann Lyons
- Rebekah Naeher
- Sadie O’Brien

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The Presbyter deadline for the January 2023 issue is December 16.

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.fpccs.org
Pastor	William G. Carter
Administrative Assistant	Nancy Owens
Coordinator of Children & Youth	Jana Schillinger
Treasurer	Wayne Griffiths
Editor	Amanda Roberts
Clerk of Session	Beverly Bright
Director of Music	Frank Jones
Director of Bells	Richard Cochrane
Organist	Kay Ten Eyck
Sexton	Don Gross

**FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE
FOR THE MONTH ENDING
October 31, 2022**

REVENUE

Budget	\$328,500
Actual Received	<u>-341,922</u>
Difference	\$ 13,422

EXPENSES

Budget	\$333,474
Actual Expenses	<u>- 355,573</u>
Difference	(\$ 22,099)

Result of operations (\$ 8,677)

PLEDGE

Budget	\$ 270,833
Actually Received	<u>- 264,287</u>
	(\$ 6,546)

2022 Per Capita assessment is \$35 per member.

Per Capita received to date = \$2,264.

**Notes from Session Meeting
Tuesday, November 8, 2022**

1. Session held a special meeting on November 13, 2022 to meet the confirmation class and to approve them for membership to the church on Sunday, November 20th.
2. The Finance Committee requested committee chairs to submit their budgets to the Finance Committee by December 3rd. The Session will hold a special meeting on Sunday, December 11, 2022 to finalize the 2023 budget as submitted by committee.
3. First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit will once again participate in the Clarks Summit Ice Festival the last week in January.
4. The Ringgold Band will hold a Christmas Concert and Sing-A-Long in our sanctuary on Friday, December 16th at 7 p.m.

Beverly Bright
Clerk of Session

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.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

Advent and Christmas Worship

Blue Christmas Service—Tuesday, December 20, 7:00 pm., sanctuary and online

Christmas Eve—Christmas pageant at 4:00 p.m., a choral Lessons and Carols at 8:00 p.m., and a Jazz Communion at 11:00 p.m. All will be in person and broadcast online.

Christmas Day and New Year's Day—Worship will be held at 10:00 a.m. on both of these Sundays.

Board and Committee Meetings

Session Meeting— Sunday, December 11, 11:15 a.m., Room 206

Board of Deacons— Tuesday, December 27, p.m., Room 206

Building and Grounds— Thursday, December 1, 7 p.m., Room 209

Christian Education—Thursday, December 1, 7 p.m., Room 206

Mission and Justice—Tuesday, December 6, 7 p.m., Room 206

Worship, Music and Arts - Thursday, December 1, 5 p.m., Room 206

Service/Study/Fellowship Gatherings

Give a Gift to a Stranger mission program—Sundays during Advent, following Worship in the Narthex

Men's Breakfast and Bible Study – Thursday, December 1 and 15, 8:30 a.m., Room 206

Intergenerational Advent program— Sunday, December 4, following worship

MBK Quilters—Tuesday, December 13, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Parent's Night Out—Friday, December 9, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Women's Circle Bible Study—Tuesday, December 20, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

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

Senior Game Group, December 15, 2 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Activities

Brass Concert and Sing-A-Long by the Ringgold Band - Friday, December 16 at 7:00 p.m.

Intergenerational lunch/event on the theme of Baptism—Sunday, January 8 following worship

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.
- AIAnon meets on Wednesdays at 8 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, December 16 with anticipated mailing date sometime soon after January 1, 2023!

Joys

Sorrows

Lectionary



December Birthdays

- 1 Maggie Woolever
- 2 Debbie Shane
- 6 Gavin Kareha
- 7 Dylan Farrell
- 8 Ginny O'Brien
- 9 Betty Keen
- 14 Lucas Kareha
Linda Young
- 15 Lori Kareha
- 18 Kevin Shane
- 19 Aaron Cole
- 20 Brian Schillinger
- 22 Jeanne Comly
Anne Deremer
- 23 Denise Reinhart
- 24 Joanie Garnecki
- 26 Marion Reese
Carole LaCoe
- 28 Shirley McLaughlin
Lou Kareha
- 30 Liam Farrell



- 23 Bill & Jessie Davis



Congratulations to

Congratulations! John Conklin & Diane Cosner,
who celebrated a Commitment Ceremony on
October 29, 2022.

Lectionary Readings

December 4 2nd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10 and Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19;
Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

December 11 3rd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10 and Psalm 146:5-10 or
Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

December 18 4th Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16 and Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

**December 25 Nativity of the Lord/
Christmas Day**

Dawn: Isaiah 62:6-12 and Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7;
Luke 2: (1-7) 8-20

Day: Isaiah 52:7-10 and Psalm 98;
Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

From the Pastor

December 2022



Christmas is upon us! At our home, the lights are up, inside and out. The gifts are ordered, and the Big Brown Truck is regularly putting them on the front porch. Schedules are negotiated and family gatherings are scheduled. Church services are planned. It looks like another Big Christmas.

Yet can I tell you this? I've never had a Christmas that has been totally satisfying.

As a child, I wrote out my Wish List in green crayon. Once in my memory, I delivered it to the Fat Guy at the department store with effervescent hope, only slightly discouraged that he didn't know my name. Then I waited. And waited. When the day arrived, most of what I listed was under the Christmas tree, thanks in no small part to those who overheard me making my list and repeating it to Santa. Most Christmas mornings, I was ecstatic at dawn and sullen in the afternoon.

Now that I've reached the age where "a pair of magenta socks" is the only item on my Wish List, I've begun to ponder why.

Perhaps I had discovered the recurring truth that more stuff doesn't make us happy. Or that new toys break quickly, especially if they are made of plastic. Or that there's an enormous amount of hype for the holiday, often fueled by the merchandisers. No single day can live up to its overinflated advertising. The thing that we saw in the catalog (remember catalogs?) is always smaller than it looked.

Probing deeper, the college philosophy class introduced me to Socrates, who proclaimed wisely that we are "leaky vessels." The soul with unrestrained desires will always require more and more, and never be complete. Fill us up, something spills out the broken seam. So, Socrates advised, "Expect less. Scale back your hopes." Helpful advice, but unsatisfying.

As age advances and the house has cleared out, I've put a lot more stock in relationships. There are people I love and wish to spend time with. I gain great delight in plotting experiences that will enrich them, even if visits are always shorter than I want and family traditions undergo constant revision.

And when I've gone to church, I've discovered the real reason for my discontent. Here it is: what I most want, what I most desire, is greater than what I'm able to receive. The Bible refers to it as "the glory of the Lord." It's a heavy presence. A full shot of it would be more than I could handle, like Moses being told he could not view the face of the Lord. He had to be content with glimpsing the Holy One walking away from him.

For all its fulfillment, Christmas continues as a promise. The Christ who is born is someone I have gotten to know, but we have yet to meet face to face. I've heard all the stories, and preached many, but I hunger for what lies behind them – and what lies ahead. And that's what returns me to church, every Christmas and every week. I want to catch another glimpse of Glory. I want to taste Grace. I need to have his Light rekindled in my soul. And I need to be surrounded by people like you, who are on the same journey.

For Christmas, I wish you Christ. I'll be right there beside you, wishing for Christ as well. See you in church.

Rev. Bill

YOUR GIVING MATTERS!

During the recent Stewardship Campaign, the Finance Committee and the Session have asked all members to increase their pledge amount by **at least 10%**. This request came because our pledges have remained at a flat rate while our expenses have continued to rise. We have also asked that you consider making a separate contribution to help rebuild our savings and investment funds. Because we spend more than we bring in, we have had to rely on these funds to balance the budget. Last year, the approved budget included the transfer of approximately \$60,000 from savings and our New Covenant investment fund. In a year where investments performed poorly and our investments lost value, this became a very hard hit for our church finances.

If we want to keep having what we have and doing what we do as a congregation, we need to increase income (10%+ bump in pledges) and rebuild our investment accounts (**\$250,000 over 3 years**). We can choose not to change anything, in which case we will use all of our savings in about **3.5 - 4 years**. At that point, the cuts will be drastic to be able to simply pay our bills.

Of course, we can alternatively cut the budget at this time to match our income. However, there are only so many expenses that are in our control - such as staff, music, and outreach. What would you cut first? The choir? Christian Education? Our mission work? We are blessed to have what we have and do what we do, but it all comes at a price.

Please consider your pledges and contributions carefully and prayerfully as we prepare the budget for the work and worship of the First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit in 2023.

Tabbi Miller-Scandle, on behalf of the Finance Committee and Session

Mission and Justice Committee:

thank you

Thanks to all of you and your generosity for helping our committee support worthy local and national causes and organizations fighting poverty and supporting human rights. The following are the organizations and causes to which we made disbursements this past month:

Catharine McAuley Center, Scranton, PA

Children's Advocacy Center, Scranton, PA

Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project, Florence, Arizona

Gwo Jan, Haiti (25% of our Peace and Global Witness Offering), our friend YaYa to disburse funds to his fellow villagers with hunger, shelter, and security needs

Mary O'Brien, to support translation services used in her pro bono work with refugees

"The reconciliation of humankind through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation.

Book of Confessions, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A., Part 1)
The Confession of 1967, 9.46

Celebrating Advent: Immanuel, God with Us

The season of Advent is a time to reflect on our many blessings, remember God's promises, practice patience (hopefully slowing down our busy-ness), and prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Here are two opportunities for that:

First, we welcome our families to pick up an **Advent Bag** filled with an Advent calendar, devotions, activity suggestions, supplies for a craft, and more. All ages and everyone in the church is welcome and encouraged to participate, so bags will be

available both for families with children and for those without. Advent bags are available to **pick up in the hallway by the sanctuary**, or contact Jana to make arrangements for safe drop off at your home.

Second, we encourage everyone to join us for an **Advent Event on Sunday, December 4**, following worship. Enjoy food and fellowship as we celebrate the season with learning and fun for all ages.



Parents' Night Out

It's a busy time of year, and sometimes, parents need to get stuff done without the kids around...whether it's Christmas shopping, wrapping, decorating, or just a quiet dinner alone, we can help! Drop your child(ren) off on **Friday, December 9, from 5:30-8:30PM** for festive games and activities (snack included), while you get done whatever needs doing. Registration is required, so please visit fpcs.org to sign up!

Also, please note all the **upcoming CE events**:

Sunday, December 4 — Advent Program (held after worship)

Friday, December 9 — Parents' Night Out (5:30-8:30pm)

Sunday, January 8 — Celebrating Christ's Baptism & Our Own (held after worship)

Sunday, February 19 — Preparing for Lent (held after worship)

Christian Education



It's for life!



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. **Bible study** with Rev. Carter and Friends

Our Adult Study is "Advent in Narnia," based on the C.S. Lewis book, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." It will begin on November 30.

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

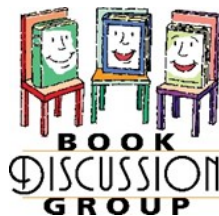
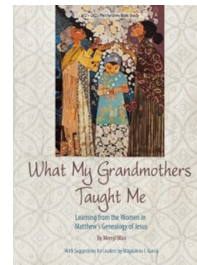


Other Opportunities for Learning

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." On December 20 we'll discuss Lesson 4, "Ruth and Loyal Love".

This group takes COVID-19 precautions when they meet.



December Hiatus

Book for January—*The Personal Librarian*

by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray.

The Book Group is taking a break during December and will meet again on Saturday, January 14, 2023 when our book will be *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray. This is the remarkable, little-known story of Belle da Costa Greene, J. P. Morgan's personal librarian who became one of the most powerful women in New York despite the dangerous secret she kept in order to make her dreams come true. Plenty of time to read the book so mark your calendar and plan to join us on January 14.



For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. Matthew 25:35

Give a Gift to a Stranger

During Advent, the Mission and Justice Committee again invites you to make a gift to a stranger. Visit the narthex to find displays and information on how to support the following individuals and organizations. For each such gift you make during this Advent season, be it through one of these programs or some other worthy cause, we urge you to mark it by selecting a colorful paper strip or candy cane from the basket at the center of the narthex and placing it in the collection box. We will use them to further decorate the room to create a visual of our giving. We'll also have cards you can fill out and give to someone letting them know you made a gift to a stranger in their honor or on their behalf.

Heifer International (www.heifer.org). Browse or borrow a catalog or explore online how you can help Heifer provide animals to participating families to end hunger and poverty and care for the Earth. Gifts can also be directed to Women's Empowerment and Earth Care. Order from their website or use the form in their catalog.

Presbyterian Giving Catalog (<https://presbyteriangifts.pcusa.org>). Browse or borrow a catalog, or explore online how you can give aid kits, livestock, agricultural supplies, water, education, or health care to needy families or individuals. Order from their website or use the form in their catalog.

Reaching the Pygmies Ministry. Established in 1994 to aid Batwa Pygmies who were evicted from their traditional rainforest home, you can purchase necessities (see the display cards) for distribution at their annual Christmas celebration.

Appalachia Service Project (<https://asphome.org>). Established in 1969, the Appalachia Service Project emphasizes mission trips for youth and adult volunteers to repair substandard housing in the central Appalachia region. You can support them through the purchase of candy (sign the list) or with a donation. Checks should be made payable to Appalachia Service Project and delivered to the church. There is no online donation option.

New Refugee Families in Lackawanna County. Fleeing political turmoil in their home countries, three families have recently resettled in our community. Each is starting a new life here and needs to set up a home and secure clothing for our colder winter. Check the Angel Tree for tags detailing specific needs; shop for the item(s) and bring them back wrapped and with the tag attached by December 18th. Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian Church with "Refugee Gifts" in the memo line.

Afghan Refugee Status update

As mentioned previously, our new neighbors from Afghanistan are running out of time. If they came in that mess we saw on TV last year, they have parole status. Which means, they have one year from when they arrived here to file to get another status to allow them to stay longer. That has expired. Our local immigration resettlement office which used to accommodate this was shut down. It is not a simple process. People here in our area are finding themselves in a very desperate situation. If they are to be flown back, the Taliban will be waiting for them on the runway.

One thing we can all do to help is reach out to our representatives and ask them to hurry up and pass the Afghan Adjustment Act. It was introduced on August 15, is being negotiated and has not yet been brought to a vote.

Also, if anyone is willing and able to help with some pro bono legal work, that would be an enormous help. Please contact Ginny O'Brien at ginny8149@gmail.com.

