



# The Presbyter

February 2024

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

## Mark your calendar!

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, has been called for Sunday, February 4, 2024 in the sanctuary, following the 10:00 a.m. worship service.



## Ash Wednesday Worship

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14 with a worship service in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m.



\* \* \* \* \*

Join us for worship on Sunday, February 11, as we gather to the sounds of New Orleans music. The South Abington Stompers will defrost our hearts on a chilly day!

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

It promises to be a fantastic day. Don't miss it!

## LIFT: Living In Faith Together



Join us after worship on **Sunday, February 18** 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 as we begin the season of **Lent**. It's a great opportunity to share fellowship and faith with our friends and family.

Also, please save the date for our next **LIFT** program:

Sunday, March 24 — Palm Sunday/Holy Week (held after worship)



## Table of Contents

- Page 2 - Session, Deacons, Financial
- Page 3 - From the Pastor
- Page 4 - Hickory Street Community Meal, Thank-yous
- Page 5 - Volunteer Corner, Neighborhood Pantry, Souper Bowl Sunday
- Page 6 - The Arts, Church Life, Lent, VBS
- Page 7 - Christian Education, Wednesday Evening Opportunities, Adult Ed
- Page 8 - Joys, Sorrows, Lectionary
- Page 9 - Calendar
- Page 10 - Easter Flowers order form

**Notes from the Session Meeting, January 14, 2024**

1. The members of Session are extremely grateful for the support they have received in 2023 from members and friends of the congregation. Your gifts and volunteer time have just been so generous that it made this an outstanding year for us. More information will be given at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 4th immediately after the worship service.
2. An Annual Omnibus Bill moved to elect Alan Baker as the president of the corporation for First Presbyterian Church, Clarks Summit. Elect Beverly Bright as the clerk of session and secretary and secretary of the corporation of FPCCS. Elect Wayne Griffiths as the church treasurer and treasurer of the corporation of FPCCS. Approve the serving of the Lord's Supper normally on the first Sunday of each month, and as scheduled for special services by the Worship, Music and Arts committee (e.g. Maundy Thursday, Easter, Pentecost and Christmas Eve)
3. Many thanks to all who helped decorate and undecorate for the Christmas season. Your time is very much appreciated.

Beverly Bright, Clerk of Session

**Board of Deacons**

Care Team Ministry Coordinators are:

Moderator	Barbara Norton 570-878-8026
Deacon Meals	Erika Adams 570-878-2410
Ushers	John Conklin
Deacon Driver	Barbara Norton 570-878-8026

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.

The Presbyterian deadline for the March 2024 issue is February 16.

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.

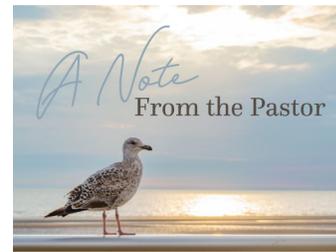
<b>Church Office</b>	<b>(570) 586-6306</b>
<b>Fax</b>	<b>(570) 587-3784</b>
<b>Web Page</b>	<b>www.fpccs.org</b>
<b>Pastor</b>	William G. Carter
<b>Administrative Assistant</b>	Nancy Owens
<b>Coordinator of Children &amp; Youth</b>	Jana Schillinger
<b>Treasurer</b>	Wayne Griffiths
<b>Editor</b>	Amanda 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  
December 31, 2023**

<b>REVENUE</b>	
Budget	\$401,469
Actual Received	<u>386,741</u>
Difference	(\$ 14,728)
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Budget	\$401,092
Actual Expenses	<u>403,888</u>
Difference	(\$ 2,796)
Result of operations	(\$ 17,524)
<b>PLEDGE</b>	
Budget	\$352,437
Actually received	<u>354,283</u>
	\$ 1,846

## From the Pastor

February 2024



Ecclesiastes is the strangest book in the Bible. When the Psalms invite us to “praise ye the Lord,” Ecclesiastes declares, “It is an unhappy business that God has given human beings to be busy with” (1:13). If Deuteronomy invites us to work hard and live a faithful life, the writer of Ecclesiastes observes, “All our efforts are like reaching for a cloud of smoke.” American Optimism suggests things are always getting better, but Ecclesiastes clears the throat to say it’s the same old cycle of seasons. What comes around goes around.

Isn’t it curious that such a document is included in our scripture? We do not hear much from Ecclesiastes in the cycles of Bible readings used in our churches. Oh, if we worship on a New Year’s Day once every three years, we may hear the most memorable quote, “For everything there is a season” (3:1). And once on a summer day, we hear the book announce, “What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? For all their days are full of pain, and their work is a vexation; even at night their minds do not rest. This also is vanity” (2:23). Hmm. Wouldn’t you rather be picnicking at the lake?

The writer of Ecclesiastes calls himself “the Preacher.” He sounds like Eeyore, the grumpy donkey from the Winnie the Pooh stories. This Preacher describes all the noble gestures of human life, then sticks a needle in the red balloon. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, Ecclesiastes is a February book, dreary and damp, demanding and depressing, overcast and foggy. Perhaps that’s why I plan to preach and teach through the book during the season of Lent. Its honesty offers a counterweight to superficiality. It pursues Truth with a capital T.

Some might think I’ve selected it for Lenten sermons because I am aging rapidly. True enough. Ecclesiastes was composed by an older person of privilege who surveys the vain mistakes and empty ambitions that have been exposed through his long life. Presumptions are punctured. Arrogance is leveled. The table filled with our accumulations is swept off abruptly, leaving us to ask, “Who am I, really?” What is my life all about? What truly matters? These are important questions for the season of Lent, as well as for all the seasons of life’s journey.

Years ago, the rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a follow up to his best seller, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. It was an exploration of Ecclesiastes, titled *When All You’ve Ever Wanted Isn’t Enough*. To nobody’s surprise, it did not sell as well. Few people want to do the hard work of self-reflection. They want to skate past life’s deep issues. But we gain a heart full of wisdom if we wrestle with them. We take a more measured view of our importance. Our previously impenetrable souls are opened to God’s grace. That is the point of it all. Remember the line in the hymn? “It’s grace that taught my heart to fear - and grace my fears relieved.”

So, let’s gather in grace and pursue a substantial Lent. We are on this journey together.

Rev. Bill

## Mission and Justice

**Early Alert:** Next Hickory Street Meal on March 23

Our next Hickory Street Community Meal will be on March 23rd so please be on the watch during February as we announce the menu and seek volunteers to prepare the entree and desserts and begin to collect the many bags of groceries we will need, as well. If you have never come on the meal day to assist, please consider doing so and put the date on your calendar; it is a great experience!

For more information, contact Alan Baker at [abaker2@verizon.net](mailto:abaker2@verizon.net) or (570) 362-0382.



## Community Meal

## Give A Gift to a Stranger—Thank you!

This was our third year getting gifts for our newest resettled refugee families. Together, as a church, we get a pair of pajamas and a toy for each child, and a gift card for each parent. We had double the people to buy gifts for this year, but with the Deacon's and your help, we did it!



I had the pleasure of delivering to the first family. They are a family of six from Syria, children ages 3-13. In the middle of the children is a third grade girl. She opened her pajamas and lit up. Then ran to her room and put them on immediately. It was a perfect fit. Next, she proceeded to open her other gift. It was a beautiful art set with crayons, markers, and colored pencils. The young girl could hardly believe it. She ran back to her room to get her notebook. Then showed it to me, it was filled with her sketches. They were primarily in ink, so one color. She scrunched into the chair next to me and started coloring in her sketches on the spot.

Thank you to everyone who supported this initiative!

## Sanctuary Holiday Un-Decoration—Thank you!

It's such fun to decorate for Christmas, not as much fun to un-decorate afterwards! So, we especially appreciate all the helpers that spent time during the week of January 9 -14 to help un-decorate the church! Thanks to Bill Carter, Jay Clymer, Dick Cochrane, Janet Dobson, Andy and Donna Kepler, Mary Ellen Lawlor, Nancy Owens, Jack Pittman, Jim Thyren, Linda Weaver, and Karen White!!! Thanks from the Music, Worship, and Arts Committee, and everyone at FPCCS!!!

## February Volunteer Corner

We're one month into the New Year and if you're like me, one or two of your resolutions have already gone by the wayside; stick to the diet, organize my attic, organize my life!

Our resolutions probably fail because we choose overly ambitious goals. I'm thinking that a do-able goal would be to try just one new thing this year. Why not consider one of the volunteer needs mentioned in the Presbyterian? It might be a one-time opportunity like packing food boxes at the Weinberg Food Bank or a more regular opportunity like helping out with Bible Time on Sunday mornings. Each month, the Presbyterian is full of possibilities.

Adrienne Horger's New Year's resolution is to give our library some attention. In her earlier years she wanted to be either a teacher or a librarian. Now a retired teacher, she's ready to take on the role of our church librarian! Watch for a future article in the Presbyterian about resources in our library.

Speaking of great resources, we all look forward to delivery of the Presbyterian each month. Amanda Roberts has been editor of the Presbyterian for 6 years! I asked her about the responsibilities connected with this role and her explanation left me breathless: compiling all submissions, formatting, fixing typos, copying and pasting into Publisher, arranging, rearranging. And this is a very simplified explanation! It's like a giant jigsaw puzzle. The hardest part of her job: LATE SUBMISSIONS. The best part: Doing it all at home in sweat pants!

If you are looking for a New Year's Resolution, our church leaders are happy to suggest some ways you can help! At home, in the church building, or in the community.

As Dr. Seuss said

"You'll never get bored when you try something new. There's no limit to what you can do."

Nancy Post



**The Neighborhood Pantry** is open 24/7 and is located on Spring St. in the entryway to the Clarks Summit Borough elevator.

**Do you want to donate?** Leave it in the pantry and we will stock it.

**In need or know someone who is?** Stop by ANY TIME!

## Souper Bowl Sunday

Sunday, February 11 isn't just the Big Game...it's a big opportunity to help those in need!

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

All proceeds will benefit the AEM Food Pantry.



## Next Arts Series Event:

Marywood Music Showcase

Sunday, March 3, 2024 4:00 pm

Faculty from Marywood University



Members of the music faculty at Marywood University will present an afternoon recital of music by Piazzolla, Faure, Schubert, with some extraordinary surprises!

Featured musicians will include:

Samantha Guevrekian, soprano

Elise Bond, clarinet

Diogo Carvalho, guitar (right)

Rick Hoffenberg, piano (left)



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, contact the church office at 570-586-6306.



## Have you ever heard of a theremin?

It's an electronic musical instrument controlled without physical contact by the performer. Sound interesting? Come to Fellowship Hour following church on February 25<sup>th</sup> for a demonstration by Jason Smeltzer. You might even be able to try and play it!

Sponsored by the Church Life Committee

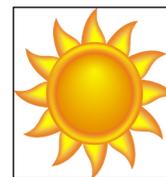


## An early start to spring cleaning

Although Lent starts early this year, before spring appears in many areas, it's an appropriate time for spring cleaning. Indeed, *Lent* comes from old German and English words for "spring." So, while it might be too soon to open windows or hang clothes on the line, now is ideal for some *spiritual* spring cleaning.

Lent calls us to examine our beliefs, confess and dispose of old grudges and selfish habits, dust off our Bibles for a new routine of study and prayer, air out our hearts and brighten up our attitudes. "Lent cleaning" lets the Holy Spirit freshen our faith — and it's never too early for that.

## Save the Date!



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

**VBS 2024** will be held **July 15 - 19**

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.

## Christian Education: Growing in Faith and Love

**Bible Time:** An opportunity for our **young children** (age 4 to approx. grade 4) to hear Bible stories told in a fun and engaging way, weekly **Bible Time** will happen during worship, for about 20 minutes. Children will be invited to attend after the anthem and will return for prayers and the end of the service.



In February we will hear more stories about Jesus' ministry, including feeding the 5,000 and hearing some of the parables He told.



**We Worship Together series:** Have you ever wondered about our church traditions? Answering questions about the way we worship, our new series for children will last about 30 minutes and will be held after worship; parents will be invited to sign up (so we know to expect your child), and each family will receive a book to take home related to the topic discussed.

SIGN UP  
HERE:



Our next program will be held on **Sunday, March 3 & Sunday, March 10** on the topic of **the Lord's Prayer**. The series will conclude with a lesson on **Sunday, May 12** to hear about **Pentecost**, but will return in the fall.

## Wednesday Evening Opportunities

**Adult Education** meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. in Room 206. On January 31, Dr. Michael Azar, associate professor of religious studies at the University of Scranton, will offer an historical introduction to the current troubles in the Holy Land. On February 7, Rev. Carter will continue the conversation.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 14, Rev. Carter will lead "Singing the Blues," a weekly Lenten study of Ecclesiastes. Drawing on study materials produced by Presbyterian Men, the group will explore life's persistent questions: Why are we here? What is the "good life"? What matters most?

**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

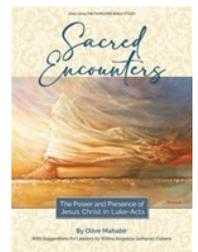
### Presbyterian Women Bible Study

February 20, 2024

Women's Bible Study Lesson 5 – Sacred Encounters: A Person with Leprosy Encounters Jesus

Overview: In this lesson's sacred encounter, a Samaritan helps us recognize holistic healing as well as systems that poison relationships and harm our sense of community. We are challenged to have faith in the miracle of Jesus healing a person with leprosy and healing our fixed ideas that limit life, discriminate, and isolate those who we consider to be "different."

The group, including Rev. Carter, gathers on the third Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. All women are welcome!



**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. All men in the church family are always welcome.

# Joys

# Sorrows

# Lectionary



Congratulations and best wishes to Samantha Guyette and Jake Cole, who were united in marriage on January 13, 2024 with Rev. Carter officiating.

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



The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Gerald Miller Sr., who passed away January 5, 2024. His wife is Joan Miller.

## Lectionary Readings

### February 4: 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c;  
1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

### February 11: Transfiguration of the Lord

2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6;  
Mark 9:2-9

### February 18: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22;  
Mark 1:9-15

### February 25: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31;  
Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38



If you would like to have your birthday or wedding anniversary included in the monthly lists, please send a note to [office@fpccs.org](mailto:office@fpccs.org) or call 570-586-6306.

### Flower Sign Up

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

The 2024 Flower Calendar is now hanging on the bulletin board next to Rev. Carter's office.



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.

## *MARK YOUR CALENDAR*

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

### Board and Committee Meetings

**Session Meeting**—No meeting in February

**Deacons**—Tuesday, February 27, 7 p.m., Room 206

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

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

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

**Worship, Music and Arts** - Thursday, February 8, 5 p.m., Room 206

### Service/Study/Fellowship Gatherings

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

**Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation**—Sunday, February 4, following worship

**MBK Quilters**—Tuesday, February 13 and 27, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

**Mardi Gras Sunday**—Sunday February 11

**Ash Wednesday Worship**—Wednesday, February 14, 7 p.m., Sanctuary

**LIFT Lenten program**—Sunday, February 18, following worship

**Presbyterian Women Bible study**—Tuesday, February 20, 10:00 a.m.

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

**Adult Education**—Each Wednesday, 6:00 p.m., Room 206

**Adult Choir**—Each Wednesday, 7 p.m., Choir Loft

**Bell Choir**—Each Wednesday, 8 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 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.

**Presbyter Deadline: Friday, February 16, 2024. Anticipated mailing date February 28, 2024.**

**The Church Office will be closed on Monday February 19 in observance of Presidents' Day.**



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

300 School Street  
Clarks Summit, PA 18411-1536

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

**DATED MATERIAL**

**Return Service Requested**



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

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

Price is \$9.00 per pot.      **Deadline is March 4**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

