



The Presbyter

December 2024

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit



Advent and Christmas are right around the corner. Begin the celebration by helping to decorate the church on Saturday, December 7, beginning at 9:30 a.m. We will be hanging wreaths, decorating Christmas trees, setting out nativities, and just general happy stuff! Please come and have fun! Our church is a big building, and we need lots of hands to get it decorated. See you then, and THANKS!

Advent and Christmas

Celebrate the season by participating in the giving of gifts through the activities on this page, and by gathering together for Worship Services and Music events listed on page 7.



Give A Gift to a Stranger

Reminder to look for us in the Narthex from **Sunday Dec. 1 through Sunday Dec. 22**. There will be tables with displays and information about the recipients of our gifts. For each gift, a paper star will be hung on the tree and elsewhere in the Narthex to create a visual of our giving. You will have the opportunity to buy gifts for individual refugee family members (look for the paper angels and paper pine trees on the tree), support Appalachian Service Project by buying their chocolates, support the Pygmy Ministry, and continue to help fund the education of Haitian students.

Looking forward to seeing you in the Narthex in December!

"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



Save the Dates:

Blue Christmas service on December 16 at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve, December 24

- 4:00 p.m. Christmas for Children and Families
- 8:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols with the Adult Choir
- 11:00 p.m. Jazz Christmas Service with the Lord's Supper and the Presbybop Quartet

All worship services will be live-streamed (and recorded) on our YouTube page. Visit www.fpccs.org

Holiday Angel Tree

THANK YOU to all who are taking part in our annual Pajama Drive for children in Head Start programs! All PJ'S, wrapped or in a gift bag along with attached tag, must be returned to the Narthex by December 10th.



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Notes from the Session Meeting

November 12, 2024

1. JoAnn Hall, Membership Chair updated Session on our membership. Once again inactive members were removed and we are glad that our membership rolls are current. Thanks, JoAnn, for a job well done.
2. As of the end of October, total pledge receipts were running \$30,000 behind budget. The Session is counting on the generosity of the congregation to help the church catch up during the Advent and Christmas season.
3. Session wishes each member and their family a Blessed holiday season and a healthy and happy 2025.

Beverly Bright, Clerk of Session

The Presbyterian deadline for the January 2025 issue is December 13.

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.

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	Amanda Roberts
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 October 31, 2024

REVENUE

Budget	\$343,498
Actual Received	<u>310,878</u>
Difference	\$(32,620)

EXPENSES

Budget	\$343,148
Actual Expenses	<u>340,583</u>
Difference	\$2,566

Result of operations (\$29,705)

PLEDGE

Budget	\$ 309,998
Actually received	<u>279,074</u>
	(\$ 30,924)

2024 Per Capita assessment is \$42 per member. In 2025, it will be \$46.10.

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

December 2024

“Some people come for the sermons, but I come for the music.” If I’ve heard it once, I’ve heard it a dozen times. When December comes, I heartily agree.

This is the season for music. Every choral group is presenting its holiday concert. Every orchestra, band, or piano teacher offers a recital of favorite melodies. And why not? Christmas prompts a lot of tunes. Some are classic (“O Holy Night”), some are faithful conjectures (“The Little Drummer Boy”), many are religiously uncommitted (“White Christmas”), and others are ridiculous parodies (“Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer”). All of these have been generated by the season – to say nothing of the Big Event at the center of it all.

Naturally, our life together will be filled with songs through the next month. In worship, we celebrate an “abbreviated Advent,” proclaiming our great human hopes without too quickly rushing to their fulfillment. That said, the Christmas carols will begin popping up by December 8. To those who protest, “But the stores have been playing ‘Jingle Bells,’ since Halloween,” my retort is simply, “Yeah, and they are trying to sell you a lot of stuff.” The carols that sing of Christ’s birth offer a different soundtrack than the jingles of unchecked consumerism that miss the true reason for the season.

I’ll preach on five Christmas carols this month. Not the ones in the hymnal, but the ones from the Gospel of Luke. It seems every time an angel appears in the Christmas story, somebody breaks into song. Sometimes it’s the angel (Luke 1:13-17 and 1:28-33) or a choir of angels (Luke 2:14), but it could be Mary (Luke 1:46-55), her Uncle Zechariah (1:68-79), or old man Simeon (Luke 2:23-32). Each carol is full of the Holy Spirit. Together, they proclaim the work of God and invite us to live in the Messiah’s light.

To this, we also add a brief Adult Education series on Handel’s Messiah and an invitation to sing along (see page 4). That’s a fresh opportunity to immerse ourselves in a favorite old tune. We will also gladly welcome the Marywood guitar ensemble at our church for a free community concert on December 6 (also on page 4). My friend Dr. Diogo Carvalho will bring a dozen acoustic guitar students to dazzle us with their string work and lift our spirits as the world grows dark.

Listening to music is a spiritual practice. I hope you’ll make time to open your heart to strong melodies, ponder rich harmonies, and tap your toes to the rhythms of God’s creativity. Music is a gift of solace and grace. And it’s good for us. As we pause beside each weary road, we listen for the angels – and the promise that they will give back the song that God has given us to sing.

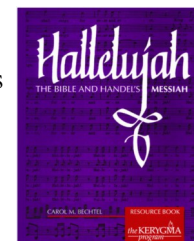
See you in church,

Rev. Bill

Wednesday Evening Opportunities

Adult Education meets on Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m., Room 206. For Advent, we will enjoy a short series reflecting on Handel's Messiah and how it proclaims scripture. Enrich your Christmas season with a deeper appreciation of this well-loved oratorio. Themes include:

- December 4: Comfort, Comfort My People
- December 11: Who May Abide the Day of His Coming
- December 18: For Unto Us a Child Is Born



As a special “class trip” open to all, all are invited to the 40th annual **Messiah sing-along** with the Arcadia Chorale, to be held on **Sunday, December 22 at 3:00 p.m.** at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Scranton, PA. Admission is \$15, and our music staff would be happy to loan you a score if you wish to join the sing-along.

Adult Choir rehearses at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday in the Sanctuary.
Bell Choir rehearses at 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday 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

Lesson 4 – Water Justice

Scripture: Genesis 1:2; 2:10; 3:17-19; 4:12; 5-9; 7:17-24; 12:10; 26:1 ; 42:5;46

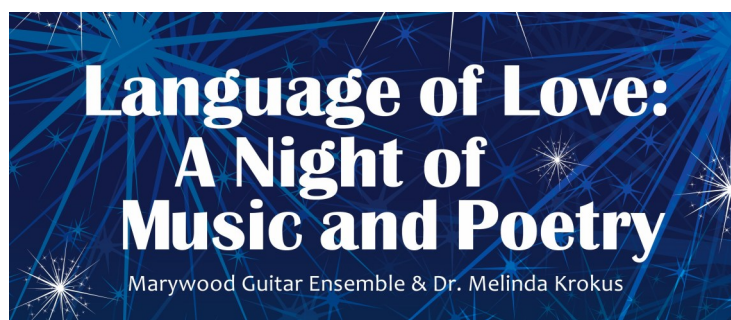
Main Idea: Water is so essential, and its presence and absence so impactful, that both Scripture and contemporary events reflect its multidimensional effects on human life.

As the first chapters of Genesis and Exodus illustrate, our issues with water take the forms of too much water, too little water, and polluted water. In the U.S. and around the world we are seeing such vulnerabilities. Yet as global warming intensifies, the unexpected continues to shock us. Join us for Bible Study in Fellowship Hall on **Tuesday December 17 at 10:00 a.m.**

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 Book of Acts and what happened to the apostles after the resurrection of Jesus. All men in the church family (and their friends) are welcome.

As a special treat:

We welcome back the **Marywood Guitar Ensemble** for a free concert in our sanctuary on **December 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.** The Ensemble warmly invites you to a program that features a diverse repertoire, including timeless carols, Viennese waltzes, and contemporary music, celebrating the spirit of the season.



They will be joined by Dr. Melinda Krokus, who will enrich the event with poetry and spiritual reflections, guiding the audience on a musical journey that captures the magic of the year's end. Please share this special evening with an outstanding musical group.

From the Generosity Team

Dr. Ann Michel of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership states: “Like prayer, scripture reading, and dedication to service, the practice of giving regularly and intentionally helps us grow in faith and mature spiritually. It serves as a continual reminder of God’s claim on our lives. It requires us to put our own needs and wants into proper perspective, setting aside our own interests for the sake of God and others. Generosity is a tool God uses to shape our hearts. Pledging helps us embrace the spiritual discipline of regular, faithful giving.” If you have not yet submitted a pledge card for 2025, please prayerfully consider your planned financial support for the coming year and place a pledge card in the offering plate during Sunday worship or drop it off at the church office.



Pledge income finances approximately 90% of our church’s operating budget. Through October 31, 2024, this year’s pledge income has fallen short of the budgeted total by approximately \$30,000. During December, the Generosity Team will appeal to the congregation’s members and friends to make “extra mile” gifts in order to close the budgetary gap. As the year draws to a close, please reflect upon the fact that all that we have is not ours; it is the Lord’s. Carefully consider your gifts--not only of money, but also of time and special skills--for the remainder of this year and for the year ahead. Let us pledge to return to God a generous portion of the great bounty that our Lord, out of love, has shared with us.

December Volunteer Corner

One Sunday a few weeks ago I watched the choir members as they entered the choir loft prior to worship. 18 singers strong that particular day - 7 men and 11 women. 18 talented volunteer musicians offering their gift of music to all of us.

Other Sundays we have the pleasure of appreciating the talents of the bell choir, directed for the past 24 years (**yes, 24 YEARS**) by Volunteer Director Dick Cochrane. Currently there are 11 ringers, two rehearsal subs and one Sunday sub.

It is important to note that these musicians don’t just pop in on Sundays to sing or ring. They rehearse weekly and share their music at funerals, at special services throughout the year, and recently led a sing-along on Worship through Service Sunday at The Pines. Some of them lend their skills to provide instrumental music on summer Sundays and on other special occasions. And of course, we recently had the pleasure of listening to all of our musicians at the “All Church Recital”.

As we enter the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we are especially grateful for these talented folks and their dedication to the music program at FPC. What would this time of year be without the sounds of music?

Jeremy Armstrong has written “music injects vitality into the service, making the worship experience more enjoyable and engaging for everyone”. So true!

Thank you to all of our musical volunteers – our worship experience is certainly enhanced by your time and talents!

If their music gives you the urge to join in, call Dick or Frank. New ringers and singers are always welcome!



Another Great Hickory Street Community Meal Project!

Many thanks to all (too many to name) who were a part of our October 26th Hickory Street Community Meal and Grocery Distribution. We served 203 meals and gave away 51 bags of groceries, both all-time highs for us. Not a crumb or grocery item you so generously provided was left. Our next project day will be April 26, 2025.



Christian Education: Growing in Faith and Love

Bible Time: After Children's Time in the sanctuary, children (age 4 to grade 4) are invited to go to **The Bible Time Classroom** (room 108) to hear Bible stories in age appropriate terminology and take part in an activity related to the story. Children will return to the sanctuary after the sermon with a take-home packet to further enhance the story they



heard. December stories will include God's promise of peace, being surprised by grace, God's gift of love, rejoice and ponder (Jesus' birth), and Simeon & Anna rejoice.

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. A mix of Bible 101, faith questions, and church basics to help prepare children in grade 6 and up for their confirmation journey, We Believe will be a combination of discussions, activities, and self-study. We will meet December 15 after worship (3rd Sunday of each month).



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.

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. Please take an Advent Bag home with you this week.

LIFT: Living In Faith Together

Join us after worship on **Sunday, December 8** 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 welcome and celebrate the season of **Advent**. 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, February 2 and **Sunday, March 9**





Advent and Christmas



Advent 1

Sunday, December 1 10 a.m., Worship and Communion, Sanctuary
Bible Time, Room 108

Friday, December 6 7 p.m., Marywood Guitar Ensemble Concert, Sanctuary

Saturday, December 7 9:30 a.m., Decorating the Sanctuary & Trees, arrival of Poinsettias

Advent 2

Sunday, December 8 10 a.m., Worship / Bible Time
11:15, Living In Faith together (LIFT) program (see CE page for details)

Advent 3

Sunday, December 15 10 a.m., Worship / Bible Time

Monday, December 16 7 p.m., Blue Christmas service, Sanctuary
offered for all who struggle during the holiday season



Advent 4

Sunday, December 22 10 a.m., Worship / Bible Time

Tuesday, December 24 Christmas Eve (Church Office closes at noon.)
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services 4 p.m., 8 p.m., 11 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25 Christmas Day (Church Office is closed.)

First Sunday of Christmas

Sunday, December 29 10 a.m., Worship

Tuesday, December 31 (Church Office closes at noon)

Wednesday, January 1, 2025 New Year's Day (Church Office is closed.)

Second Sunday of Christmas

Sunday, January 5 10 a.m. Worship
11:15 a.m. Un-decorating the Sanctuary! Soup lunch to follow.

Monday, January 6 Epiphany (Resume regular Church Office hours.)

Lectionary Readings

December 1: 1st Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33: 14-16; Psalm 25: 1-10;
1Thessalonians 3: 9-13; Luke 21: 25-36

December 8: 2nd Sunday of Advent

Malachi 3: 1-4; Luke 1: 68-79; Philippians 1: 3-11;
Luke 3: 1-6

December 15: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7;
Luke 3:7-18

December 22: 4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5: 2-5a; Luke 1: 46b-55 or Psalm 80: 1-7;
Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-45 (46-55)

December 29: 1st Sunday of Christmas

1 Samuel 2: 18-20, 26; Psalm 148;
Colossians 3: 12-17; Luke 2: 41-52

Joys

Sorrows

Prayers



- 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
- 23 Denise Reinhart
- 26 Marion Reese
Carole LaCoe
- 28 Lou Kareha
- 30 Liam Farrell



- 23 Bill & Jessie Davis



Congratulations to Camila Gonzalez and Warren Acker on their marriage on October 26th in California. First Presbyterian sends Best Wishes to them.

Our prayers are with the families of two very long-time members. We are sad to announce that:

Linda Schuller passed away in the Lancaster area after a long illness. Her friends are invited to a reception in our Fellowship Hall Saturday, December 7, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon; and

Joanie Garnecki passed away unexpectedly on November 22, 2024. A funeral will be held in our Sanctuary on Saturday, December 7, 3:00 p.m. Friends may visit from 1:00 p.m. until the time of the service.



Thank You

A generous gift to the Endowment Fund has been received in memory of Barbara Pittman given by her husband Jack. Remember that information about a transfer to the Endowment, Memorial or General Operating Funds of First Presbyterian Church in Clarks Summit is available from the church office. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to a member of the Generosity Team, Dave Naehner, Chair, Heather Acker, Michael Thompson, Jack Pittman or Beverly Bright. Session appreciates all contributions in memory of Loved ones.



December Prayer List for soon to be united Lackawanna and Lehigh Presbyteries

- College Hill Presbyterian Church
- First Presbyterian Church Hazleton
- First Presbyterian Church Montrose
- Shawnee Presbyterian Church
- Welsh Presbyterian Church, Warrior Run

For more information on our Presbyteries, or for these individual churches, go to polackawanna.org or 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, December 5, 7 p.m., Room 209

Christian Education—Thursday, December 5, 7 p.m., Room 206

Mission and Justice—Tuesday, December 3, 7 p.m., Room 206

Worship, Music and Arts - Thursday, December 12, 5 p.m., Room 206

Service/Study/Fellowship Gatherings

Men's Breakfast and Bible Study – Thursday, December 5 and 19, 8:30 a.m., Room 206

Marywood Guitar Ensemble Concert —Friday December 6, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Decorating the Church—Saturday, December 7, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Memorial Reception for Linda Schuller—Saturday, December 7, 10:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Memorial Service for Joanie Garnecki—Saturday, December 7, 3:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Living In Faith together (LIFT) —Sunday, December 8, 11:15 a.m.

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

Mobile Food Pantry— Thursday, December 12, 4 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Presbyterian Women's Bible Study—Tuesday, December 17, 10:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Grief Support Group—Thursday, December 19, 6:00 p.m., Gathering Place

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), each morning, 7 a.m. in Room 206 and each Tuesday, 7 p.m., Room 111
- 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, 3 p.m.; Tuesdays, 6 p.m.; Saturdays, 9:45 a.m.

Deadline for the January 2025 Presbyterian: Friday, December 13, 2024.

Anticipated mailing date January 8, 2025.



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



Ice Festival Art Show At First Presbyterian

First Presbyterian is happy to once again host a juried photographic exhibit, as well as the fine artwork of its talented parishioners at the 2025 Clarks Summit Ice Festival. If you would like to be a part of the event, here's what you need to know.



Art Show

Elaine Tweedy will coordinate the Art Show again in January. **If you are interested in participating, you will need to let her know by December 31st, 2024.** You can contact Elaine via her cell at 570-575-1705 or email: elainetweedy@gmail.com. All participants must be registered by that date. There will be no late entries accepted.

Drop off of artwork and photography will be Thursday, January 23rd between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. Pick up of your work will be Sunday, January 26th between Noon and 1:30 p.m. Photography work will be juried, with first place, second place and best of show awards. On the artist side of the event, there will be a first and second place award. Attendees will also get to vote on a People's Choice Award as part of the show!

For more information and to receive future updated emails with a schedule of the event, contact Elaine.



January 24-26, 2025 — Clarks Summit Festival of Ice

Details on activities at First Presbyterian Church will be in the January 2025 issue of The Presbyter.
