



The Presbyter

March 2025

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

For forty days and forty nights: The Season of Lent

March 5 is designated as Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent. We will mark it with a worship service at 7:00 p.m., preceded by an adult education class at 5:45 p.m. But what is Lent? Here are seven quick questions and answers:

- 1) *How long is the season?* Lent lasts for forty days.
- 2) *Why forty days?* Forty is a recurring number in the Bible, signifying “a good long time.” Jesus fasted in the wilderness for forty days before he began his ministry. That is probably the origin.
- 3) *On the calendar, it’s forty-six days from Ash Wednesday to Easter. Why?* We don’t count the Sundays, which are regarded as “Little Easters.”
- 4) *Do I have to give up chocolate for Lent?* Presbyterians don’t impose spiritual prohibitions on their church members. But we do suggest that we keep this season as a way to deepen our faith and reconnect with God.
- 5) *What are ways to deepen faith and reconnect with God?* Certainly fasting is a time-honored discipline. Fasting is a voluntary restraint from overindulgence of any kind. We watch out for overeating, mind our words, guard our thoughts, even restrict our TV watching. And there are also positive actions we can take: reading the Bible, meditating, praying, journaling, or contributing money and time to those in need.
- 6) *What’s the purpose of keeping this season?* The spiritual life does not come easy for any of us. It requires discipline and attention if we are to shape our lives more like Christ. Try taking on one specific practice for forty days. Keep at it.
- 7) *What is our church’s theme for Lent?* This year, we invite you to **Come Home with Luke**. That is, the Gospel of Luke. He speaks of “repentance” as a return to God (see page 3). That’s our invitation. And if you haven’t been with us in worship, why not join us on Sunday? We’d love to see you!



**Daylight Savings Time begins
March 9.
Turn your clocks ahead 1 hour.**

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From the clerk of Session

Our year end reporting.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of the First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit took place on February 9, 2025 following worship in Fellowship Hall.

Our Annual Report, Pastor's Terms of Call, 2024 Church Statistical Report (that determines our 2026 Per Capita Apportionment) have been sent to the Mountain Laurel Presbytery.

Session would like to thank our members and friends for all the support that you gave us in the 2024 year. We do appreciate all of YOU.



The Nursery, located in room 208 on the sanctuary level of the building, is open Sunday mornings 9:40—11:10 a.m. for children ages 3 and younger.

The **Presbyter** deadline for the April 2025 issue is **March 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.fpccs.org
Pastor	William G. Carter
Administrative Assistant	Nancy Owens
Coordinator of Children & Youth	Jana Schillinger
Treasurer	Wayne Griffiths
Editor	<i>Vacant</i>
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 January 31, 2025

REVENUE		
Budget		\$34,350
Actual Received		<u>46,018</u>
Difference		\$11,668

EXPENSES		
Budget		\$34,932
Actual Expenses		<u>35,862</u>
Difference		(\$ 931)

Result of operations \$10,737

PLEDGE		
Budget		\$ 31,000
Actually received		<u>39,514</u>
Difference		\$ 8,514

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

Dear Friends—

We begin the season of Lent with the prophet Joel. In his book, he makes the ultimate invitation, which will be our churchwide theme for the season: “Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.” (Joel 2:13)

In one of his stories, Garrison Keillor describes the return of those who wandered away from Lake Wobegon Lutheran Church. It was Christmas time, he says, and the exiles came home. One of them is Larry Sorenson, dubbed “Larry the Sad Boy.” He had been saved twelve times in the Lutheran church, an all-time record. Keillor describes him:

In the course of eight years, he threw himself weeping and contrite on God’s throne of grace on twelve separate occasions – and this in a Lutheran church that wasn’t evangelical, had no altar call, no organist playing “Just As I Am Without One Plea” while a choir hummed and a guy with shiny hair took hold of your heartstrings and played you like a cheap guitar – this is the Lutheran church, not a bunch of hillbillies – these are Scandinavians, and they repent in the same way that they sin: discretely, tastefully, at the proper time, and bring a Jell-o salad for afterward. Larry came forward weeping buckets and crumpled up at the communion rail, to the amazement of the minister, who had developed a dry sermon about stewardship, and who now had to put his arm around this limp soggy individual and pray with him and see if he had a ride home. Twelve times. Even the fundamentalists got tired of him. Granted, we’re born in original sin and are worthless and vile, but twelve conversions are too many.

Keillor has his tongue in cheek, of course. He knows we are prone to wander from the God we love. He also knows there is a good bit of religious play-acting that smacks of fakery. Repentance is the invitation to return to God. To cancel our excuses. To dispel our distractions. To turn away and turn back. To journey to where we are most deeply loved.

Perhaps old Larry didn’t understand the true character of God. He imagined a finger-wagging Deity who was ready to dish out guilt and hurl thunderbolts at wayward sinners. By contrast, the prophet Joel perceived a different Mystery at work. Reaching deeply into Israel’s greatest statement of faith, he declares God is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.”

This is our hope, too, for we have seen God in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. His invitation persists, once, twice, a dozen times, a thousand times. “Return to me,” says the Lord, “with all your heart.” Your broken heart. Your cracked-open heart. Your defenseless heart. Your available heart. Your joyful heart. Your loving heart. “Return to me.”

Lent is the open season for returning. Been away? Come home. Not sure how to return? Just come. Anxious how you will be received? You’ll be received with open arms. Fearful what others might think? Oh, we already think the world of you.

Come home. God is waiting.

Rev. Bill

Wednesday Evening Opportunities

Adult Education meets on Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m., Room 206. **Our Lenten study is called “An Acceptable Fast.”** Based on the Old Testament lectionary readings for the season of Lent, Old Testament scholar Patricia Tull describes the biblical verses in their original context and then explores a key Lenten theme related to the text. Themes include: voicing gratitude, taking the long view, choosing well, accepting responsibility, welcoming the future and trusting God in times of conflict.

All are welcome to join the weekly conversations. Also, the study materials will be available through the weekly e-mail from the church. Please download them at home and use them for your daily reflections!

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 7: Economic Climate Justice

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

Main Idea: The Bible’s economic wisdom never promises to eradicate poverty: “You always have the poor with you,” it says instead. But we can reduce suffering and strengthen the entire social network.

Both Moses and Jesus affirmed, “You always have the poor with you.” Moses continued, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.”

Today we have plenty of evidence of injustices past and present that lock neighbors in shackles of need. This is especially the case in efforts to cope with climate change. Both abroad and in the U.S., more people than we can fathom are already suffering its effects. Yet we have solutions. As people of faith we are called to speak out to urge our society to act for just transitions in this fast-changing world.

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

March 2: Transfiguration of the Lord

Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99;
2 Corinthians 3: 12-4:2; Luke 9: 28-36 (37-43a)

March 9: 1st Sunday in Lent

Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16;
Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

March 16: 2nd Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15; 1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17
- 4: 1; Luke 13: 31-35 or Luke 9: 28-36 (37-43a)

March 23: 3rd Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10: 1-13;
Luke 13: 1-9

March 30: 4th Sunday in Lent

Joshua 5: 9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21;
Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

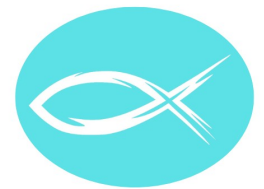
Christian Education: Growing in Faith and Love

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. **March stories** will include listening to Jesus, being a good neighbor, growing God's kingdom, celebrating, and being lost & found.



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. 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. Our next meeting is **March 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/fpcs-we-believe/>



Help needed for two upcoming events:

1. Volunteers to make pots of soup for LIFT program (which takes place after Worship on March 9).
2. Volunteers to join a planning group for a Seder meal scheduled for Palm Sunday, April 13, following Worship.

From Ashes to Alleluia: Marking the Season of Lent



church — join us in observing this important season.

Lent is a time for reflection, repentance, and preparing our hearts to remember the crucifixion and celebrate the resurrection. We invite everyone to pick up a **Lent Bag** filled with devotions and activities to mark the season. **Lent Bags** are available now to pick up at the

LIFT: Living In Faith Together

Begin the Lenten season by joining us after worship on **Sunday, March 9** 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 date for our next **LIFT** programs:

Sunday, April 13 (Holy Week) and **Sunday, June 8 (Pentecost)**





Mission and Justice Committee

One Great Hour of Sharing special offering runs from March 5- April 20.

It supports efforts to relieve hunger through the **Presbyterian Hunger Program**, promotes development through the **Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People**, and assists in areas of disaster through **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance**. All three programs work in different

ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

Please consider giving to this important offering.

STATE HOSPITAL LUNCHEON

Tuesday, April 1, noon



All are welcome to join us for a meal and fellowship with guests from Clarks Summit State Hospital. Any questions or if interested in attending that day, please do not hesitate in giving me a call, or leave a message at the church office , 570-586-6306 or office@fpccs.org

Janet Dobson

COMING SOON: SPRING HIGHWAY CLEANUP

We'll hold our first highway cleanup for PennDOT on Saturday morning, **April 12**, meeting at 9:00 am in the parking lot of the Methodist Church at corner of the Morgan Highway and Grove Street.



All are welcome. Takes us about an hour to divide up and pick up the trash from the roadside on the highway between Winola Road and Country Club Road. Gloves, trash bags, and safety vests are provided. Let Alan Baker know at abaker2@verizon.net if you can help or have any questions.

COMING: ANOTHER HICKORY STREET COMMUNITY MEAL

On Saturday, **April 26** we will again be preparing and serving a free community meal at Hickory Street Presbyterian Church, so be watching for signup sheets to appear in the Narthex. As usual, we will need volunteers to prepare the entree (Shepherd's Pie!), supply desserts, serve the meal, transport items over the day before, and to supply lots of groceries for the food bags we give away the same day. Hunger and Food Insecurity are very real here among our neighbors and this is one small thing we can do to help many of them. For more information, contact Alan Baker at abaker2@verizon.net.



Community Meal

From the Generosity Team

Recall this account from Matthew 4:18-22: “As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea--for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.” In chapter nine of the same Gospel, we read: “As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he got up and followed him.”



These disciples answered Jesus' call willingly; they did not say, “let someone else do it” or “pick someone else Lord.” Too often in the life of the church we rely on someone else to do the things that need to be done in order to carry out its mission and ministry. The church is God's house and, just as in any household, there are many tasks to be completed by its members.

Our congregation maintains a membership directory. No one named “Someone Else” is in it. “Someone Else” cannot offer financial support, time, or talents. Only we can do that! Like the disciples in the Gospel accounts, it is we who should answer Christ's call and, in so doing, take an active role in the church. Search your heart, recognize your talents, and give them back to God.

All that we have is not ours; it is the Lord's. May we continue to return to God a generous portion of the great bounty that has been given to us.

March 2025 Volunteer Corner

Help needed for two upcoming events:

1. Volunteers to make pots of soup for LIFT program (after Worship on March 9).
2. Volunteers to join a planning group for a Seder meal scheduled for Palm Sunday, April 12, following Worship.

Volunteer Spotlight on.....Briar Woodley



The congregation sees Briar Woodley on Sunday mornings in the choir loft, but her volunteering at FPC goes far beyond the choir rail!

When I asked Briar about her memories as a youth at FPC, she recalled having the best time at VBS – and loved tie dying t-shirts every summer! She also recalled being part of a group volunteering at SERRV, sorting handcrafts to sell.

That early volunteer experience has certainly expanded into her adult years. She served on Session for a term beginning in 2012 and returned to Session in 2019. She currently serves as Chair of the Fellowship Committee (the very busy Fellowship Committee).

During the week Briar is a Radiologic Technologist at Geisinger Viewmont Imaging. AND on occasion, she has even rearranged her work schedule to volunteer at our Food Pantry.

Thank you Briar, for all your volunteer contributions here at FPC!

A special thank you to all the volunteers who made the Ice Festival a rousing success!

The Arts

at First Presbyterian Church

The next month or so will be an active time for the Arts at First Presbyterian as we present three special concerts. All of the concerts are open to the public free of charge, with free-will offerings taken to help defray the costs of the events.



Irish Celebration with the Lyric Consort

Sunday, March 16 at 4:00 p.m.

We welcome back this favorite a capella group as they lead us in celebration of St. Patty's Day. Come dressed in green on a day everybody is Irish.

Tuba Recital

Saturday, March 29 at 7 p.m.

Renowned British tuba player Will Druiett will perform a recital for solo tuba and piano. Druiett has appeared on recitals throughout Europe, USA, and Asia. Recently Will was invited to perform as a soloist as part of the 79th Vienna Philharmonic Ball in the Musikverein.



An Evening with the Seraph Brass

Saturday, April 5 at 7:00 p.m.

"The next Canadian Brass" is how critics describe this the world's best brass players. Don't miss this outstanding ensemble as they return to NEPA. They will raise the roof!

You won't want to miss this AMAZING line-up!

Arts at First Presbyterian is looking for a host home or homes for two female musicians for the April 5 concert. The host would need to house the individual(s) on Saturday evening and provide breakfast on Sunday morning. The host would also need to provide transportation from church to your home after the concert and back to church Sunday morning. The only requirements are a separate room and a pet-free and smoke-free home.

If interested, please contact the webmaster at webmaster@fpccs.org, or contact the office at 570-586-6306.



Shrove Tuesday

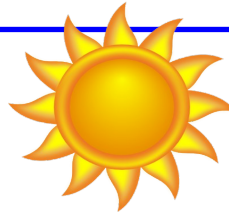
Pancake Supper

At Church of the Epiphany

25 Church Hill Rd., Glenburn,

March 4, 5-7 p.m.

All proceeds benefit the Dalton Food Pantry.



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.

Souper Bowl Sunday

Thank You!

This year we collected

\$410

for the AEM Food Pantry through the Souper Bowl of Caring.



Are you looking for a way to honor or remember a special person?

... for a way to encourage others?

We have an opportunity for you to do both!

The flowers that grace the pulpit most weeks make our sanctuary more beautiful, but they do so much more than that. Many people donate arrangements to remember loved ones or honor special moments, but their generosity brings beauty and joy beyond the worship service. The deacons often deliver bouquets to our local senior living facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, and individual members who cannot join us in worship. Those beautiful flowers bring joy to many.



The flower donation calendar in the hallway outside the church office has several blank spaces. Would you or your church committee be willing to sign up to beautify our sanctuary and bring light to others? The process is not complicated. You can sign up on the calendar; Karis and Rebekah Naeher will contact you close to the date to work out the details. Alternatively, you can contact Karis via email (klnaeher@outlook.com) or phone (570-561-5985) to ask questions or to see which dates are available. We look forward to hearing from you!

Joys

Sorrows

Prayers

MARCH



- 7 Nina Schillinger
- 11 Sue Sill
- 12 Jim Thyren
- 16 Candy Ferrese
- 20 Chuck Woolever
- 23 Jacob Gilbert
- 27 Bonnie Plantholt
- 29 Nancy Post
Bill Davis
- 31 Beverly Bright



The Sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Alice Broxton, who entered the Church Triumphant February 6, 2025.

The Sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Janet Loewe, who entered the Church Triumphant February 22, 2025.



An old hymn declares:

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 "Come unto me and rest.
 Lay down, O weary one,
 lay down your head upon my breast."
 I came to Jesus as I was,
 so weary, worn and sad.
 I found in him a resting-place,
 and he has made me glad.

(Horatius Bonar, 1846)

Prayer List for soon to be united Lackawanna and Lehigh Presbyteries

- Hawley Presbyterian Church
- Inkerman Presbyterian Church
- Church of Christ Uniting
- Leighton Presbyterian Church
- Montrose Presbyterian Church
- Nanticoke Presbyterian Church

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

Board and Committee Meetings

Session Meeting— Tuesday, March 11, 7 p.m., Room 206

Board of Deacons—Tuesday, March 25, 7:00 p.m., Room 206

Building and Grounds— Thursday, April 3, 7 p.m., Room 209

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

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

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

Worship, Music and Arts - Thursday, March 6, 5:30 p.m., Room 206

Service/Study/Fellowship Gatherings

Ash Wednesday Service—March 5, 7 p.m., Sanctuary

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

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

Presbyterian Women's Bible Study—Tuesday, March 18, 10:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Deadline to purchase Easter tulips—Sunday, March 16

Arts at First Presbyterian: Irish Celebration with the Lyric Consort, Sunday, March 16, 4 p.m., Sanctuary

Arts Concert: Tuba Recital with Renowned British tuba player Will Druiett, Saturday, March 29, 7 p.m., Sanctuary

"We Worship Together series, March 2 (see page 5)

"LIFT—Living in Faith Together," March 9 (see page 5) **Volunteers are needed** (see page 7)

"We Believe" pre-confirmation class, March 16 (see page 5)

Girl Scouts—Friday, March 14, 5—8p.m., Room 111

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 a.m. in Room 206.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) also meets each Tuesday evening, 7 p.m., Room 111.

- 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 April 2025 Presbyterian: Friday, March 14, 2025.

Anticipated mailing date is March 26.



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



6 1/2" Pots of Tulips will be ordered for Easter Morning.

Easter Tulip Order Form

Price is \$9.00 per pot. Deadline is Sunday, March 16.

Please make checks payable to "First Presbyterian Church".

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Number of tulip pots _____ @ \$9.00 each. Total amount enclosed: _____

Dedication: In memory/In honor of: _____

I will take my flowers. _____

You may place your order in the offering plate or turn it in at the church office.