



# The Presbyter

February 2026

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

## Arts at First Presbyterian goes to the movies!

On **Saturday, Feb. 7 at 4 p.m.**, the Arts at First Presbyterian will host a silent movie with organist Dan Brownell accompanying.

The concert series is supported in part by a Lackawanna County Community Arts and Culture Grant, but we depend heavily on individual contributions.

If you would like to make a contribution to the Arts Series, please make it payable to First Presbyterian Church and write "Arts Series" in the memo block.

Thank you for your support!



**The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit** has been called for Sunday, Feb. 8 following our morning worship service. It will take place in Fellowship Hall.



**The Ash Wednesday service** will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary.



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### Notes from the Session Meeting

#### Notes from the Session Meeting on Jan. 11, 2026

In late 2025 Session committees asked the congregation for monies for different projects that they needed. You as a congregation responded overwhelmingly. THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

For example, Our Gift to a Stranger program - Congregation ordered \$500 worth of chocolates for Appalachian Service Project and purchasing \$810 worth of supplies for the Pygmies in Uganda, which raised our account that supports Haitian children's education and also purchasing many gifts for immigrant families. Music, Worship & Arts requests were also made. New bibles were placed in the sanctuary with monies from the Memorial Fund. Monies were also raised with donations from you to replace the old pipes in our organ -- much appreciation to all of you - you are a wonderful congregation. Our Endowment Fund has been growing rapidly with recent donations amounting to approximately \$65,000.

1. Our roof has been repaired, and four of our heat pumps have to be replaced in the near future.
2. Christian Education Committee has important topics on Wednesday evenings, the Lift Program continues along with our Confirmation Class meeting regularly.
3. John Young will remain our Elder to Presbytery. Thank you, John!

Beverly Bright, Clerk of Session

The Presbyter deadline for  
the March issue is  
February 25.

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**

**Fax**

**Web Page**

**Pastor**

**Administrative Assistant**

**Coordinator of Children & Youth**

**Editor**

**Clerk of Session**

**Director of Music**

**Director of Bells**

**Organist**

**Sexton**

**(570) 586-6306**

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**www.fpccs.org**

William G. Carter

Joy Albright

Jana Schillinger

Christine Lee

Beverly Bright

Frank Jones

Richard Cochrane

Kay Ten Eyck

Michael Lambert

### FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR THE MONTH ENDING January, 2026

One of the improvements in our church's finances has come from YOU. Each year, our congregation is responsible for a fair share of the administrative costs of our national denomination. We ask for your help in contributing toward this cost., which our church is obligated to pay.

Per capita assessment for 2026 is \$48.00 per member.

#### Session approved the Annual Omnibus Bill.

1. Elect Heather Acker as the president of the corporation of First Presbyterian Church, Clarks Summit
2. Elect Beverly Bright as the clerk of session and secretary of the corporation of FPCCS.
3. Elect Wayne Griffiths as the church treasurer and treasurer of the corporation of APCCS.

### Board of Deacons

Care Team Ministry Coordinators are:

Moderator Erika Adams

Deacon Meals Diana Pope-Albright

Ushers Bette Ellis

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

One day, I walked into our administrative assistant's office and found her reading a book. "What's that?" I asked. "It's this," Joy said, holding up a copy of the Presbyterian Book of Order. Then to explain, she added, "I'm trying to figure out how you people work."

I applaud that. She's new to the congregation. She's also curious. I have to marvel at her initiative, both in finding that part of our denominational constitution and wading through it. It can be a slow read. In recent years, the national organization has whittled down the size of the volume, but it's full of procedures, definitions, and governmental structures. There are some firm rules, marked by the word "shall," as well as softer suggestions, marked by the word "may."

The Book of Order is often dismissed as a thick document, obtuse and impractical. Yet I know that every single word has been discussed at length before it went into print. Every rule and suggestion has been discerned by practical experience and sanctified common sense. It's a manual developed by groups, not a private declaration by experts.

Years ago, a nearby church got in touch with us. "We are growing," they said, "and our leadership structure needs to change. Could we get a copy of your church's constitution?" I gave their representative a copy of the Book of Order. "Wow!" he exclaimed, noting its thoroughness. "Did you come up with all of this?" Absolutely not! The wider circle of Presbyterians discerned it was a compendium of best practices. It still is.

Here is one of the big distinctives for Presbyterians: we get to pick our own leaders. Leaders are not handed down from a cathedral or a holy mountain. They are not hand-picked in a back room or assigned by an obscure official in a distant office. No, Presbyterian leaders bubble up from their congregations. They are nurtured in faith, instructed in service, and prayed-over with love. We get to know one another and then we ask, "Who is God lifting up for our attention?"

This month, the Nominating Team of our People in Ministry committee begins the annual search for elders and deacons. According to our constitution, they can serve a three-year term with the possibility of a one-time re-election. After an aggregate of six years, they are required to take a year off. Not everybody wants a second term, of course, and sometimes they cannot complete a full term. Yet there is wisdom in providing continuity – and wisdom in completing one's term of service. No single voice dominates in the Presbyterian Church. We work together as a team.

I want our leaders to have a satisfying experience. For me, that means keeping our meetings focused and well-planned. There's a lot of work by committees and individuals that happens between the larger board meetings. We aspire to honor these efforts and use the board meetings for reports, updates, new initiatives, and key decisions. The process works best through trust, respect, and a honest inquiry of "What does the Lord Jesus Christ want to accomplish through us?" That's how we work around here.

Know of any good caregivers who would make effective Deacons? Or decisive leaders who could serve as Elders? It's open season for searching, and we appreciate all input!

With you in the journey,

*Rev. Bill*

## Wednesday Evening Opportunities

**Sermon on the Mount** - As February begins, our Wednesday evening Bible Study continues to explore the Sermon on the Mount, a large collection of Jesus' teachings as found in chapters five, six, and seven in the Gospel of Matthew. The study meets in Room 206 at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. All are welcome, especially those who have never taken part in a Bible study.

Jan. 28 - Introduction and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-16)

Feb. 4 – The Higher Righteousness (Matthew 5:17-48)

Feb. 11 – Matthew 6

Feb. 18 – Matthew 7

**NOTE:** The study on February 18 (Ash Wednesday) will lead into a 7 p.m. Ash Wednesday service for all in the church sanctuary.

**The Celtic Way: When Heaven Touches Earth** - Our Wednesday Lenten study is planned in support of our church's April pilgrimage to Ireland and to offer fresh approaches to our spiritual life based on the ancient Celtic Christian practices. Beginning on Wednesday, February 25 and continuing through April 1, we will explore the Celtic contributions to the Christian life. We will learn about an ancient saint or two, reflect on the "thin places" we have known, and discuss the high crosses and the ornate vines that decorate them. From the Celts, we will also pick up some tips on how they kept the Christian fires burning when the wider culture turned violent or indifferent. We hope you can join us for this in-person class at 6:00 p.m. in Room 206 at the church. All are invited.

**Adult Education** meets on Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m., Room 206. **Adult Choir** rehearses at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary. **Bell Choir** rehearses at 8:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

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**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.

\*\*\*\*\*



Women's Bible Study Lesson 6, "Finding Our Joy in Christ"

Philippians 4:1-23

Tuesday, February 17, 10:00 a.m.

Main idea: Christian joy emerges from a deep belief that God is good and God reigns forever.

## Lectionary Readings

### February 1: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Mic. 6:1-8 and Ps. 15; 1Cor. 1:18-31; Matt. 5:1-12

### February 8: 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Isa.58:1-9a (9b-12) and Ps. 112:1-9 (10); 1 Cor. 2:1-12 (13-16); Matt.5:13-20

### February 15: Transfiguration of the Lord

Ex. 24:12-18 and Ps. 99; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; Matt. 17:1-9

### February 22: 1st Sunday of Lent

Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-7 and Ps. 31; Rom. 5:12-19; Matt. 4:1-11

## Christian Education: Growing in Faith and Love

The Christian Education and Growth committee is pleased to offer a number of opportunities for our children, youth, and adults to explore the Bible, understand our traditions, and experience ways to live in faith. We believe that faith formation is a lifelong practice, so we invite everyone to find a class, opportunity, or practice that will grow YOUR faith this winter and beyond.

**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.



**Confirmation Class:** Confirmation continues for interested youth grade 7 and up. Lessons held most Sundays after worship, 11:15AM to 12:30PM. Confirmation Sunday will be Sunday, May 24 (Pentecost). We invite everyone to join us in celebrating our confirmands on this special day!

### LIFT: Living In Faith Together

Shake off the snow and join us after worship on **Sunday, February 22** for a meal and intergenerational program. It's the **first Sunday of Lent**: come hear more about the season and how we can prepare our hearts for Easter. 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, March 29 (Holy Week)** and **Sunday, May 17 (Ascension)**



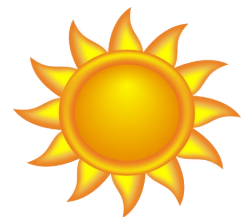
### Souper Bowl Sunday

Sunday, February 8th isn't just the Big Game...it's a big opportunity to help hungry neighbors in need!

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



### Save the Date!



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

**VBS 2026** will be held **July 13 - 17**

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.



## Mission and Justice Committee

Committee and congregational members were involved in the following outreach this past year:

Volunteering at St. Francis of Assisi Kitchen

Highway cleanup (three Saturdays) as our participation in the Department of Transportation's Adopt-A-Highway program.

Volunteering at NEPA Youth Shelter

Assisting refugee families with settling into their new lives in a new country

Packing boxes of food at Weinberg NE Regional Food Bank

Volunteering at Community Intervention Center

Coordinating the Mobile Food Pantry on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month. Providing groceries, preparing and serving two meals (4/28/25- 212 dinners, 46 bags of groceries; 10/25/25- 232 dinners, 55 bags of groceries) as part of the Hickory Street Community Meals Program.

This is a congregation that takes seriously the charge to love the poor and needy. Thank you for generously helping to care for God's people in our neighborhood and in our world with your financial support, and with your gifts of time, energy, good ideas, and hard work.

### Thank you!



The Worship, Music and the Arts Committee wants to shout out big THANK YOUs for all your help this Christmas season!

THANK YOU to everyone who put up Christmas trees, wreaths, garland, nativities, advent candelers, poinsettia trees, and everything else to decorate the sanctuary and narthex for Advent and Christmas!

THANK YOU to everyone who helped replace the old, worn Bibles in the sanctuary with new shiny Bibles, and found new homes for the old ones!

THANK YOU for the all the special donations to repair the flute pipes in our wonderful organ and purchase new sanctuary bibles!

THANK YOU for the new choir folders and music holders!

THANK YOU from Frank Jones for his new director's chair!

And last but not least, THANK YOU to Connie and John Weiss, Catherine Huhn, and Kay Ten Eyck for the beautiful prelude music at the 8 p.m. Christmas Eve service! We are lucky to have such talented people as members and friends of our congregation!!

## From the Generosity Team

Second Corinthians 9:7-8 states, “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.”



Presbyterian congregations are asked to pay an annual amount of money per church member – a per capita apportionment. The annual per capita amount is a combined request from the presbytery, synod, and General Assembly – based on their respective budgets for the coming year. Every Presbyterian shares in the benefit of the PCUSA’s system of government, so every Presbyterian is asked to share the expenses associated with coordinating and performing the functions of that system.

At the national level, per capita dollars fund General Assembly meetings, the costs of training events for presbytery and synod church leaders, administration of ordination exams, work that helps all Presbyterians to discern their vocation, including calls to professional ministry, the Presbyterian Historical Society, and production of publications, such as the Book of Order and the Book of Confessions. At the Presbytery level, per capita helps to underwrite the costs of Presbytery staff and volunteer teams, training for elders, deacons, and commissioned ruling elders, resourcing for pastoral nominating committees, and Presbytery meetings and gatherings.

We are grateful that our congregation’s longstanding tradition is to pay our share of per capita in full each year. For 2026, that amount is \$48 per member, which will total just over \$14,000. Your gifts toward per capita reduce the amount that must be absorbed by the church’s general operating budget. Please prayerfully consider a donation to this important part of our ministry, either with the blue envelope in this year’s box or via our website.

### Care Packages to loved ones

The Deacons are once again preparing to send care packages to your college, postgraduate, or military loved ones! Please send your loved one's name and address to Jamie Strong, either by email: [office@fpccs.org](mailto:office@fpccs.org) or by phone (570) 885-4374. Please make sure to provide their current and complete address. Thank you.

Care Packages



### Volunteer Corner

Spotlight on.....Erika Adams

Erika Adams enjoyed the fellowship she experienced as a visitor at FPC. She became a member in 2018, having previously been active in a Presbyterian church in New York.

She has been a Deacon for almost 5 years, and is currently serving as Moderator.

In her words, “The best part of being a Deacon is participating in open discussions of congregation and community needs; and the best way to assist. Where there is adversity, the deacons will figure out ways to encourage and support. It’s heartwarming and fulfilling to serve.”

You don’t need to be a member of the Board of Deacons to participate in their work. They are extending an invitation to members of the congregation to help usher or greet on Sundays. No experience is required – just come with a welcoming smile! If interested, reach out to Erika or Bett Ellis.

### Younger(er) Adults

The FPC Young(er) Adult Group will meet on Jan. 31 at noon at the church for the Ice Festival for the Chili Cafe and Drum Circle. Everyone will be free to explore the festival on your own before or after. In February, we are planning to host a movie night. In March, we are looking to go bowling. Let Michael know if you are interested in attending any of these events at [mkthompson96@gmail.com](mailto:mkthompson96@gmail.com) or 518-577-8691.

### 2026 Flower calendar

If you would like to contribute flowers to the Sanctuary on Sunday morning, please write your name on the calendar, you will be contacted.



Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Frank Garnecki  
Francis Garnecki and Patti Lynn Duncan  
Recited their vows on January 8, 2026

### THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

So many thanks to everyone who purchased pajamas for Christmas. Sixty-one pairs of PJ's were distributed among five Head Start centers. The generosity of our congregation is AMAZING!

### From My Brothers' Keeper:

Thank you from My Brothers' Keeper for the stuffing material we have received to make our sleeping bags for the homeless. The need is great this time of year, and we already incorporated the donations into the bags of our latest delivery to the Community Intervention Center – so please keep them coming!!



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

**Happy 90th Birthday to  
Char Lyons January 26th**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

### Board and Committee Meetings

**Annual Meeting**— Sunday, February 8, 11:15 a.m., Fellowship Hall

**Board of Deacons**—Tuesday, February 24, 7:00 p.m., Room 206

**Building and Grounds**— Thursday, February 5, 7 p.m., Room 209

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

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

**Worship, Music and Arts** - Thursday, February 5, 5:30 p.m., Room 206

### Service/Study/Fellowship Gatherings

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

**MBK Quilters**—Tuesday, February 10 and 24, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

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

**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, 6:15 p.m., in the Sanctuary

**Bell Choir**—Most Wednesdays, 7:00 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 March, 2026 Presbyter: Friday, February 20 2026.**

**Anticipated mailing date February 25, 2026**



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



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

300 School Street

Clarks Summit, PA 18411-1536

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U.S. Postage  
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Clarks Summit PA

**DATED MATERIAL**

**Return Service Requested**

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



**Monthly Church  
Prayer List**



Hawley Presbyterian Church  
Inkerman Presbyterian Church  
Church of Christ Uniting  
Lehighton Presbyterian Church  
Montrose Presbyterian Church  
Nanticoke Presbyterian Church

**PRAYER**  
*list*