

The Bell Tower

First Presbyterian Church Happenings

March MMXXVI

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY! First Presbyterian Church will provide a hot meal to the clients of **THE GOOD SHEPHERD CENTER** on Monday, March 16th. The number of meals requested has increased to 250. Covenant Partners will be working together to provide ingredients, prepare foods, and deliver meals. Details will be suggested in the church bulletin with sign-ups at the table above the rear glass doors. Please call or text 724-456-1989 with suggestions or questions. Thank you in advance for your assistance—we can be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community!



LENTEN SEASON & WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- March 29** – Palm Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.
- April 2** – Maundy Thursday Worship in the Sanctuary 6:00 p.m.
- April 3-4** – Prayer Vigil 6:00 p.m. ~ 10:00 a.m.
- April 5** – Easter Sunday
 - Sunrise Service 6:30 a.m. Hempfield Park.
 - Easter Celebration 10:45 a.m.

GOOD SHEPHERD EASTER REQUEST

We have been asked to supply boxes of mashed potatoes to help with the distribution of Easter holiday food bags. Thank you for helping to join forces in lending a helping hand. The deadline for the collection is **March 23**.

EASTER WEEKEND PRAYER VIGIL

Sign-up sheets are available at each entrance of the sanctuary. The prayer vigil will begin Good Friday, April 3 at 6:00 p.m. through Holy Saturday, April 4 at 10:00 a.m. Times of prayer are hour intervals. Please feel free to come for all or part of that time, alone or with others. All are invited to join this time of prayer and meditation. Our Board of Deacons has once again agreed to provide building security during the vigil.



| | |
|------------------|------|
| Carole Lentz | 3/2 |
| Jim Miller | 3/4 |
| Jennifer Edwards | 3/6 |
| Ben Miller | 3/8 |
| Ken Stitt | 3/8 |
| Ryan Wallace | 3/8 |
| Patrick Davis | 3/15 |
| Hazel Harpst | 3/15 |
| Patty Eddy | 3/18 |
| Lisa Courtney | 3/20 |
| Virginia Snyder | 3/21 |
| Bill Fagley | 3/22 |
| Nash Truby | 3/24 |
| Todd Hittle | 3/25 |
| Andrew Hofing | 3/25 |
| Dave Miller | 3/29 |
| Tim Scobbie | 3/29 |
| Hayden Miller | 3/30 |
| Darlene Artman | 3/31 |

Youth

| | |
|---------------|------|
| Jacob Carter | 3/15 |
| Sidney Hart | 3/17 |
| Madison Straw | 3/20 |
| Luke Young | 3/29 |

A **TUREEN LUNCHEON** is scheduled for March 29th (Palm Sunday) after worship. Plan to join in the togetherness of a shared meal on this beautiful holy day. Tableware will be provided as well as coffee and drinks. Plan to bring a casserole or covered dish to share with our church family and friends. Kitchen will be open early for safety of hot/cold foods. We look forward to fellowship and camaraderie!

- Sponsored by Congregational Life Committee

EASTER SHARE OFFERING

This is one of our special offerings and the one we collect during Lent. This year we decided to designate the offering to SHOW (Shared Hope for Orphans Worldwide). Brian Saunders (president of SHOW) has been supporting an orphanage and village in Uganda. Brian is a regular participant in our alternative Christmas. They have enabled many improvements at the orphanage. The current project is to have a well drilled in the village to provide clean, fresh water. Currently it must be carried by bucket quite a distance. Brian will be in our church sometime in March to further explain the need. Donations can be given using the Easter envelope in your offering box or by using a pew envelope clearly marked Easter Share offering will be received throughout Lent and the Easter Season. Thank you in advance for your generosity.



March 14, 2026, at 8:00 a.m. All men are welcome no cost to attend!

PW Daytime Circle will meet Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. in the church Conference Room. Bonnie Barr will lead the Bible Study on Sarah, pages 16-19. Janie Miller will share devotions. All women are welcome to join us!

PW EVENING CIRCLE plans to meet Tuesday, March 3 at 6:00 p.m. Lesson 6, on Phillip the church parlor.

Greeters Schedule

| | |
|------|------------------------|
| 3/8 | John Russell |
| 3/15 | Michelle Harris |
| 3/22 | Terri Clark |
| 3/29 | Karen Patterson |
| 4/5 | Doug & Michele Groover |

MARCH NURSERY SCHEDULE

| | |
|------|------------------------------------|
| 3/8 | Ericka Dershimer & Nancy Hoffacker |
| 3/15 | Jamie Ickes family |
| 3/22 | Kelly & Matt Minner |
| 3/29 | Sue Blum & Paulla Johnson |
| 4/5 | Sue Wilson & Michelle Harris |

THE COLLEGE AGE COMMITTEE would like to send "snail mail" notes of encouragement and a small gift this spring. If you have a college age young adult we would appreciate it if you could update us with their name and best mailing address home or school. Please feel free to email the church office: office@fpcgreenville.com or Cathy Petty: cpettypt@gmail.com or Dan Baker: daniel.baker7082@gmail.com If you prefer you could drop the address off at the church office prior to March 20th. Thank you in advance.

LENTEN RESOURCES FROM OUR CHURCH LIBRARY

Youth:

Twos the Season of Lent: Devotions and Stories for the Lenten and Easter Seasons
by Glenys Neillist

Adult:

Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter with more than seventy Lenten and Easter readings by C.S. Lewis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Henri Nouwen, Christian Rossetti and many more authors.



Christian Camp Scholarships Available

The Session of First Presbyterian Church continues to make available scholarships for summer Christian camps to youth and families of the Church. Requests for this scholarship opportunity can be directed to the Christian Education Committee by contacting Dan Baker.



Snail Mail Reminder

The Congregational Life Committee would like to remind everyone to please contact the church office if you know of someone in our congregation who would appreciate receiving an uplifting card or note. We are currently sending monthly cards to those who find it challenging to join us in person.



I've always been fascinated by the mythology of the phoenix — the story of a bird that bursts into flames only for new life to rise from the ashes. As I've grown older, I've realized how deeply that image echoes the gospel. Death to life. That is the story of Jesus. And it is our story too.

In John 11, we see it clearly. Lazarus is not mostly dead — he is dead, buried four days, and decomposition has begun. There is a stench. And yet Jesus calls him out of the grave into new life. It is a beautiful and powerful reminder that Jesus brings life where there seems to be none. And then Jesus does something even greater. No one calls Him out by name. He rises on His own. He conquers death forever.

Lent is a season where we reflect on this pattern of death and life. Our sin leads to death, but Jesus says, "Believe in me." Follow me. You have been called out of the grave like Lazarus. Leave behind the grave clothes. Step into new life.

Transitions feel like death. Things change. Comfort is stripped away. But throughout creation, we see that fire often precedes renewal. Certain pine trees only release their seeds after fire opens their cones. What looks like destruction becomes the very means of new growth.

The same is true for the church. Times of transition can feel uncertain, even frightening. Lazarus walking out of the tomb must have been both astonishing and unsettling. But that story led to celebration, worship, and one of the most beautiful acts of devotion ever recorded. Let's not fear the fire. Let's trust the One who brings life from it.

This Lent, and in this season of transition, embrace the call to new life. Leave behind what binds. Step forward into who God is calling you — and calling us — to be.

Next Steps of Transition:

By the time you read this, you will have seen the Vision Team standing at the front of the sanctuary during worship. I thought it would be helpful to explain what they will be doing. This team has been formed to seek God's vision for how we serve Greenville in order to accomplish the mission.

The mission of this church is the mission of every church — the words of Jesus in **Matthew 28**: to go and make disciples of all nations (all people groups), teaching them to obey everything He commanded and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The mission does not change.

The vision answers the question: How do we live out that mission here in Greenville, among the people God has placed around us?

That vision will shape everything — how we function as a church, how we steward our finances, what ministries we prioritize, and what we will need in our next Senior Pastor. Vision clarifies direction and aligns our future.

This team will be led by Dori Little and Rev. Janet Hufford upon her arrival. Together they will work through **Church Unique by Will Mancini** and prayerfully engage the MissionInsite data made available to us through ECO. MissionInsite provides insight into the demographics of our community — spiritual trends, economic realities, and even the common hopes and fears of our neighbors. This information helps us better understand the people we are called to serve.

(Continued)

The team consists of six Covenant Partners, two Elders, two Deacons, and two Staff members:

Tim Eckhardt
Karen Shilling
Doug Groover
Mary Jane Fay
Randy Curtis
Ben Claypool
Betsy Klingensmith
Nancy Hoffacker
Bonnie Barr
Ericka Dershimer
Erin Slagle
Molly Davis

This is an important and significant task. It will require prayer, listening, humility, and courage.

Please commit to praying for this team as they seek the Lord's direction for our church's future.

These are the things they will work through with Dori and Janet:

#1. Who are we?

Bullard's Church Life Cycle analysis
What is our church culture?
Neutral Zone realities

#2. Where are we?

Utilizing insights from Mission InSite reports.
Discuss the insights about your locale derived from the data.
What is your potential? What resources do you have/need to meet them?
How do your gifts line up with your potential for ministry?

#3. What have we done?

Celebrate the past.
What is your church's DNA?
List all your ministries even the small and informal ones.
Honest discussion re: what needs to be let go? Sacred cows?

#4. and #5. Where are we going – Crafting the Vision Statement

This is a collaborative process and hard work.
Build it on a story and/or specific scripture.
Key: It should be both short and memorable.

#5. Discerning the Values

What 4 – 6 values undergird our Vision?

These are the shared convictions that guide the actions and reveal the strengths of the church.

These, too, must also be short and memorable.
These convey your church's ministry character.

#6. Delineating the Measures

What 4 – 6 measures reveal accomplishment(s) of our Vision?

These are tangible indicators of progress in living out your discerned vision.

These too, must also be short and memorable.
These enable you to celebrate your "wins".

The Reverend Dr. Janet A. Hufford
12 Davidson Avenue, Greenville, PA 16125 (as of 3/23!)
412-877-9370
janetann386@gmail.com

Janet is glad for the return home, since she was born and raised in W PA. Janet's oldest daughter, Angela, works as a biologist at Harvard medical school in Boston. However, her mother, Gen; youngest daughter, Holly; and brother, Bob, live within a couple of hours from Greenville. Holly works with special needs adults. Gen and Bob are retired. A special connection to the Greenville area is that nearly every summer Janet, her mom, and brother rented a cabin to fish at Pymatuning Lake, feed the ducks that walk on the back of fish in Linesville, and go to Conneaut Lake amusement park.

Janet's father died when she was eight years old. Soon after her father's death, Janet received her first Bible that led to her call to ministry as a comfort from her Protestant scout leaders. (Janet grew up Roman Catholic.) After reading in 1John 4:8 & 16 that God is love, Janet dedicated her life to Christ Jesus.

Janet earned her bachelor's degree at the University of Pittsburgh. After graduation, she became the CFO of the Municipality of Monroeville, where she had graduated from high school and worked through college. Next, she acquired a Masters of Business Administration from Duquesne University, and worked for Westinghouse. Janet then halted her career to raise her daughters, while acting as "the unpaid staff member" at church, mainly serving in Christian Education for children, youth, and adults.

In 2003 Janet earned her Masters of Divinity from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and became the pastor of New Hope PC in North Huntingdon, PA. She served there for 12 years through 2015, when she also completed her Doctorate of Divinity. In 2016 she was called briefly to a church in NY, which recently closed. Then from 2017-18 she was contracted for 2 years as a designated pastor N of Pittsburgh. In 2018 she was certified ready to receive a call with ECO in River of Life Presbytery, but with the small size of the denomination none came. Therefore, when she was called to another PC(USA) congregation in central OH she accepted. From 2019-2024 Janet served as installed pastor at the congregation, but the longing to be closer to family and friends increased while visiting W PA in the summer of 2023.

Through prayer, she believed that God intended to prepare her for transitional ministry back in PA through ECO. (She was student interim minister during fieldwork in seminary and loved it. But knew moving every couple of years would not be best for the young children of a single mother. So, she waited and then called the director for transitional ministry for ECO, who encouraged her to become certified, hearing that she had already had comparable training and experience through Interim Ministry Network and various studies in family systems. Janet started certified transitional pastor (CTP) courses at the 2023 national gathering and finished them while serving a contract year at Hawley Memorial PC in central PA. Two of the three prayers were answered in central PA, when Janet became a transitional pastor for ECO. Now with Janet's call extended by the session of FPC in Greenville, Janet is delighted that God's third promise for her to return to W PA, while continuing to serve as an ECO transitional pastor, is now being fulfilled at FPC Greenville! Janet's ECO transitional coach is Bill Enns! Janet finally met transitional consultants for FPC, Bill and Dori Little, at the ECO NG in February. During her in person interview the following week, Janet met the Transitional Pastor Nominating Committee and some of the staff of FPC. She looks forward to serving Christ with all of you just after Easter. May Jesus Christ be praised. What a great journey the Lord has planned for us!

Highlights of Session Meeting, February 9, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

- Opening prayer and scripture focus.
- Review of Elder Training for Session and Six Disciplines of the Servant Leader.
- Praise and prayer offered for our recently deceased Covenant Partner, Terri Miller.
 - Motions passed by Session:
To accept the financial report as prepared by our accountants;

To accept the new Elder committee assignments;

To begin a spiritual Shepherding Program;

The Vision Team shall be comprised as follows: two (2) Elders; two (2) Deacons; two (2) Staff; and six (6) members of the congregation;

To partner with Downtown Ministries for their Sacred Spaces Tour on March 14th; and

To permit Deacons to conduct the Good Friday vigil in the sanctuary.

- Closing prayer at 8:38 pm.

At the Special Meeting of Session on February 16, 2026, 9 am, the motion presented by CTP Search Team to extend a call to Rev. Dr. Janet Ann Hufford to serve as our Certified Transitional Pastor commencing in April, 2026, carried unanimously.

SPIRITUAL SHEPHERDING PROGRAM

Session is excited to start this new program announced by our Bridge Pastor, Ben Claypool. Each Covenant Partner has been matched to an Elder who will be acting as the "shepherd" to the Covenant Partner. Elders will seek to learn prayer concerns, discern how faith can grow, as well as general care and concern for those in their "flock". Shepherding fosters a sense of community and connection. It encourages individuals to look out for one another, promoting a culture of support and accountability. These are goals that we seek in our community of faith at First Presbyterian Church.

Volunteers Needed for Vacation Bible School

Plans are underway for Vacation Bible School 2026 **Rainforest Falls**. We will be exploring the nature of God through the book of Psalms and the gospel of Luke!

This year's VBS will be held **June 22nd – 26th**. There are many different ways you can contribute and serve. Sign-ups will be at both entrances of the church, or email kelly.minner@gmail.com

Your help is greatly needed and appreciated! Looking forward to working alongside you to make this VBS a memorable experience for all.

Kelly Minner, VBS Director



Vacation Bible School Decorations

Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God

June 21–26 will be here before we know it! We are excited to welcome children as they learn about God's Word through Bible stories, recreation, snacks, and engaging activities. To transform our space into *Rainforest Falls*, we need help with decorations. We'll be creating a variety of rainforest-themed items. No special skills are needed—materials and instructions will be provided. Come enjoy fellowship with a wonderful team. Join us for one decorating session or several.

Decorating Dates:

March 13 - 10:00 a.m. to noon

April 10 & 24 - 10:00 a.m. to noon

May 8 & 22 10:00 a.m. to noon

June 13 - 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

If you can't attend on those dates, projects are available to complete at home on your own schedule.

Please contact Kelly Minner or Mary K. Miller if you would like to help or have questions.

Generations of Women's Sharing Kindness

All women are invited to a morning of fellowship, study and connection

Date: March 21, 2026 Time: 9am to 12:00noon

(Optional after lunch activity: Stay to plant your own plant)

Location: First Presbyterian Church, Calvin Hall

We will begin with a light breakfast, followed by a talk on Ruth and Naomi
Lunch is included. There is no cost, however reservations are required by March

9.

Please call the church office at 724-456-6520 to make a reservation.
Christian Education Committee would like to welcome all women to this event.



YOUTH AND ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
SUNDAY OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday Mornings

Children's Music Ministry/Erin Slagle

The Sunday School students and teachers have been singing and moving through a selection of classic sacred children's songs at the beginning of Sunday School. Some of the songs we're singing include: This is the Day, Jesus Loves Me, Jesus Loves the Little Children, This Little Light of Mine, The B-I-B-L-E, God is So Good, Hallelu-Hallelujah (a favorite of ours!), and more! Our collection of songs comes from a binder full of music used by previous Sunday School music teachers. At the moment, we are learning the song for The Lord's Prayer since we end every music lesson by praying The Lord's Prayer.

Preschool, Room 106/Jen Forbes, Becky Bray, Lucy Wheaton/Kathy Scobbie

The Preschool class is using Gospel Light. The fall series was learning about God's love. The winter series is entitled "Jesus Loves Me and Helps Me".

K - 3rd grade, Room 107/ Karen Edwards/Paulla Johnson

The K-3rd grade class is using a curriculum from Lifeway Kids entitled "Explore the Bible". The lessons are from both the Old and New Testaments. The last four lessons have been focused on the life of David.

4th - 6th grade, Room 109/ Mary K Miller, Jill Murchak and others

Our 4th-6th grade students have been reading the Bible about the relationship between King Saul and David. We discussed how Saul's jealousy of David's success led to harmful choices. In class discussions our students reflected on how others may sometimes act unkindly out of jealousy for the gifts God has given us. We are also learning the 23rd Psalms.

High School (Jr/Sr High)/College Age, Room 102 /Matt and Kelly Minner

The 7th-12th and College aged group have been studying 1 Samuel 16. We have been discussing the ideas that God cares about the condition of our hearts and that becoming more like Jesus will lead us to serve others in humility. This is a great tie-in to our Pay It Forward project to serve our deployed military members with care packages, as we have also been discussing our plans for this project.

During Sunday Morning Worship Service

Children's Church on 2nd & 4th Sundays, Elementary Sunday School Area /Various teachers/helpers

Children's Church on Sunday, February 22nd included scripture from the book of John. The youth discussed how John the Baptist announced that Jesus was coming, how Jesus brings us close to God and how God came to be with us and doesn't want anything to separate us from Him.

Youth Sunday Night Programming

Elementary - 24/7 KIDS/ Leaders Terri Deist, Ericka Dershimer, Molly Davis, Ben Claypool

The youth are using the So So Show (a video) to help understand a passage from the Bible. The youth then participate in an activity that corresponds to the passage. For example, on 2/15/26 the topic was "Joy is a Gift from Christ" (John 15:11)

612 GNO - (girls) /Leaders Terri Deist, Molly Davis, Ericka Dershimer, Jamie Hart

They use the same format for example, on 2/15/26 the topic was "God's Love is for Everyone" (John 3:16)

The Forge - (boys)/ Leaders: Ben Claypool, Dan Baker

They use the same format for example, on 2/15/26 the topic was "God Has Given You Power"

(2 Timothy 1:7) The Bible is our curriculum for all groups. The teachers have the freedom to teach that Bible verse how they best feel it fits.

Adult Classes

Chapel/Sharon Nystrom/Gospel of Mark to begin in mid-February

Conference Room/Tom Brainard/Eric Geiger's study on the book of Jude.

Calvin Hall/Pastor Ben/What do I do with this book?

If you have any questions, please contact the teachers/leaders for additional information.