

THE NEXUS

JANUARY 2024

Presbyterian Church
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Nicki's News

Dear friends and members,

For those of you who may be unaware, by the time you read this, I will have completed my position as moderator of the Lehigh Presbytery. I was blessed to be a part of the first year where we were fully sharing staff cooperatively between Lackawanna and Lehigh Presbytery. Like our local churches, who have done several shared ministry activities, the Presbyteries have discovered we do ministry better together. At the last assembly in November, the minister and elder commissioners from both presbyteries gave the blessing to pursue a merger. Those of you who think this doesn't matter should know it does. If we understand our Presbyterian process and connectional nature, we can better grasp how beneficial it is to have the Presbytery's guidance and support. According to the book of order the "Presbytery... has a particular responsibility to coordinate, guide, encourage, support, and resource the work of its congregations for the most effective witness to the broader community." (G-3.0301)

When we take collections and actions as a connectional church, we are more effective in spreading God's love further. The presbytery has a large role in guiding us as they collect the data, attend informational seminars, and then, in turn, support churches with up-to-date information. This information is for varying church needs from grant funds to do new missional work to providing state-required training for free or at an affordable rate for smaller churches. Our collective presbyteries are admired by others in the denomination for our willingness to experiment allowing the Holy Spirit to speak and guide, all while continuing to seek ways to best support churches in this ever-changing environment. As we step into this New Year, both as a church and as a church in the Lehigh Presbytery may

we pray for each other's continued exploration to live into God's call.

In His Peace,

Pastor Nicki

Nexus Deadline

The Nexus deadline for the February issue is Monday, January 29th.

Congratulations!

To Greg and Lisa Menio on their first grandchild. Samuel Fisher Robinson was born on November 7th to Sarah and Patrick Robinson.



Birthdays:

Celebrating birthdays in **January** are:

Ed Flory, Bobbie Long, Mikayla Charpentier, Keli Butera, Ed West and Loos Swisher.

Anniversaries:

Celebrating an anniversary in **January** are:

John and Kathleen Kauderer

Nexus Sponsor

If you are interested in sponsoring an issue, the cost is \$35.00. A new sign-up sheet is in the lobby for next year's issues.

Per Capita...What?

It's often noted that most congregants in Presbyterian churches are either unaware of or have not learned about the Presbyterian governing structure. As you may recall in my pastor letter from last year, part of what most congregants are unaware of is what is called Per Capita. Per Capita supports the work of the Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assembly. Each church is obligated to pay that year's set portion for each of its members. The presbyteries then are obligated to pay a portion of that to both the Synod and General Assembly. Without the connectional nature of our church, our Missions to other countries and even those in the U.S. would not be possible. This connectional nature also displays a unified body of Christ. As a church, we pay each member's per capita whether they pay it themselves or not. This year's per capita amount will remain the same at \$48.00 per member. This is due to the connectional nature of our churches as the Lehigh Presbytery and Lackawanna Presbytery are doing cooperative ministry sharing staff. Members are invited to help defer this expense by paying their portion and, if possible, a portion for another member who may not be able to afford it.

A Thankful Note

A special thank you to the members of the Choir and Bell Choir for providing beautiful music during Advent. These volunteers from the congregation give their time and talent to praise God through music. Look for more singing and ringing in 2024!

Linda Schaller

Are You Being Called?

Many have asked what is going on with the roof. The process to obtain bids took longer than any could anticipate. The bidding did not turn out as we hoped. God appears to be calling us in a different direction to this roof problem, but discernment of which direction God is guiding us is needed. The Finance and Property Committee has felt led to gather a task team to explore where God is guiding us in the next steps. Pastor Nicki will be leading the team. Meeting times will be determined by the availability of those on the task team when it has been fully formed. Do you feel God calling you to discern with fellow disciples where God is leading us in this? If you have further questions or would like to be a part of this task team, please reach out to anyone on the Finance and Property Committee: Jim Hall, Chris Neighbors, Rick Sanker, Judy Schreck, Tom Long, Chris Vogel. You are invited to call the office or let the Pastor know if you would like to be a part of this task team.



**CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING**

Congregational Meeting

There is a congregational meeting planned for Sunday, January 28th, following the worship service.

Youth Group

January plans are going to be interesting. We are hoping that God will bring snow to go sledding, but if not, we will still gather for another fun activity on the last Sunday afternoon of the month. If it snows close to a weekend, be on the lookout for an email to pull us together for sledding.

Scriptural Reasoning

Over the past three years, our monthly Inspirarity Dialogue sessions have provided enriching exchanges. Building on this foundation, we are now introducing Scriptural Reasoning (SR) to our communities.

Supported by Cambridge University, Scriptural Reasoning (SR) serves as a tool for interfaith dialogue, where people of different faiths come together to read and reflect on their scriptures. Unlike some forms of interfaith engagement, SR focuses not on seeking agreement but rather on exploring texts and their interpretations across faith boundaries, and on learning to 'disagree better'. This often leads to a deeper understanding of both others' scriptures and one's own, as well as fostering strong bonds across faith communities.

Join us Sunday, January 14th for the first S.R. It will be held at Chestnut Retreat Center at 7554 Mt. Easton Road, Saylorsburg at 2:30 p.m.

Refreshments will be served. For those not attending in person, join online at bit.ly/scripturalreasoning

January Meetings & Events

- January 1st & 2nd – Church Office Closed
- January 6th – Women's Retreat from 10-3:00
- January 7th – Adult Ed. Class, 9:00 a.m.
Worship, 10:00 a.m.
TOALC kickoff
- January 14th Adult Ed. Class, 9:00 a.m.
Worship, 10:00 a.m.
Session Meeting
Scriptural Reasoning, 2:30 @
Chestnut Retreat Center
- January 21st Adult Ed. Class, 9:00 a.m.
Worship, 10:00 a.m.
- January 28th Adult Ed. Class, 9:00 a.m.
Worship, 10:00 a.m.
Congregational meeting, following
worship
Youth Group Sledding!!

Women's Retreat

Author Jan Richardson, in a post on her website notes... "that in some parts of the world, Epiphany Day (January 6, which brings the Christmas season to a close) is also celebrated as Women's Christmas. Originating in Ireland, where it is known as *Nollaig na mBan*, Women's Christmas began as a day when the women, who often carried the domestic responsibilities all year, took Epiphany as an occasion to enjoy a bit of respite and celebrate together at the end of the holidays.

Whether your domestic duties are many or few, Women's Christmas is a good time to pause and take a break from whatever has kept you busy in the past weeks or months. As the Christmas season ends, this is an occasion both to celebrate with friends and also to spend time in reflection before diving into the responsibilities of this new year." With this in mind, ESPC will be hosting a shared ministry women's day retreat on January 6th from 10 am-3 pm. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board or you can use this link fpcstroudsburg.org/events/womensretreat to register online. There will be workshops to nurture your souls, a time to refresh and recharge, and lunch for nurturing bodies and friendships. The cost is \$10.



Brighter Christmas

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Brighter Christmas campaign this year. We were able to collect toys and clothes for 5 families, a total of 15 children! The blessings and generosity of this congregation never ceases to amaze me! God bless you for being cheerful givers and making Christmas a little bit brighter for these children and their families.

Living into Our Mission

Here are ways we have brought God's light to our community in recent months:

1. We have helped someone move into a new apartment with furniture and home furnishings they needed.
2. We have provided meals for Family Promise.
3. We have supplied food to individuals and have taken food to the North Pantry.
4. We provided temporary room and board for people traveling through our area.
5. We supplied, blessed and delivered backpacks to kids in need.
6. We provided practice space for summer choir practices.
7. We baptized some babies!
8. We completed and are starting a new TOALC session.
9. We have had several Walk & Talks
10. We have given rides, meals and visits to our congregants.
11. We have donated money to Ukraine.
12. We donated funds to Common Threads, Angel's Closet, Angel's & Dragonflies, 2nd Coming Thrift Shop and Timberwolf Pantry.
13. We contributed to One Great Hour of Sharing.
14. We contributed to the Peace & Global Witness Offering.
15. We contributed to Alice Visionary Project.
16. We provided space to the Lehigh Presbytery for some activities.
17. We support *Cares*. Once a week we have young adults with special needs come in and volunteer small chores around the church.
18. Some members volunteered to Ring the Bell for the Salvation Army during the Christmas season.
19. Sunday School kids made cards and cookies and delivered them to shut-ins for Christmas.
20. We donated money to the Earthquake Relief in Turkey.
21. We started a new task list for our church.
22. We celebrated Lent with shared ministry and meals with neighboring churches.
23. We had an Easter Egg hunt with other churches.
24. We had a Ramadan dinner here at ESPC.
25. We welcomed new members!
26. We had a yard sale and sent donations to 3 different causes.
27. We support Angel's Closet by being a drop-off location for bundle pickups.
28. We have supported Street to Feet.
29. We held a Bible study group.
30. We donated Thanksgiving food baskets to families in need.
31. We sent 36 boxes overseas to children for Operation Christmas Child.
32. We donated Christmas food baskets to families in need.
33. We helped three families have a Brighter Christmas.

Artists-In-Residence Mission

The Presbyterian Church of the Mountain, in Delaware Water Gap is establishing an Artist-in-Residence mission to advance the arts in faith, church mission, and the D.W.G. community. The Church of the Mountain, a small but vibrant and creative congregation, wants to share their God-given talents. "We are blessed with poets, painters, writers, musicians, composers and songwriters in our congregation who will serve as mentors in the community for anyone of any age who is interested in learning more about these arts" says Reverend Sherry Blackman, pastor of the church. If interested in learning more, contact Rev. Blackman at 570-476-0345 or by email: pcom106@gmail.com or pick up more information in the lobby.

Church Elders

Sharon Laverdure Ellie Buff
Sandra Rydell Judy Schreck Jim Hall
Phil Lawrence Debbie Prince Lisa Swanson

Nexus Staff

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Editor: Jen Carmella

Contributing Editors: Amanda Denny, Linda Schaller

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Year's Day Church Closed	2 Church Closed	3	4	5	6 Women's Retreat 10:00-3:00
7 Adult Ed. 9:00 Worship, 10:00 TOALC kickoff	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Adult Ed. 9:00 Choir, 9:00 Worship, 10:00 Bell Choir Session Mtg. S.R. 2:30	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Adult Ed. 9:00 Worship, 10:00	22 TOALC classes start	23	24	25	26	27
28 Adult Ed. 9:00 Worship, 10:00 Congregational Meeting Youth Day!	29	30	31			