



The United Presbyterian Church of New Kensington

601 Fifth Avenue
New Kensington, PA 15068-6508
724-339-6618

E-mail: churchoffice@tupcnk.org

Website: tupcnk.org



December 2024 Newsletter



Our Mission

is to serve God by:
Preaching God's Word,
Teaching God's Love,
Healing God's People

Our Staff

The Rev. Becca Siddle Covenant Pastor
pastoroffice@tupcnk.org

Holly Lightner Organist/Choir Director

Mary Ellen Hicks Secretary
churchoffice@tupcnk.org

Lynn Crumley Custodian
Bob Berisko Custodian

Deacons Food Bank

Office Hours:
Monday — Thursday
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Regular Worship Hours:
10:00 am Sunday School
11:00 am Worship

Pastor's Message



Advent greetings to you, friends!

Most of you will receive this newsletter before you've given thanks for your turkey and green bean casseroles the *first* time, not to mention the second and third times! But as you know by now, Advent is quite literally on the cusp of Thanksgiving this year, which may be making your head spin a little faster than usual the closer we get to Christmas. But I'm going to issue the exact same reminder I did this time last year: Christmas does not, in fact, come immediately on the heels of Thanksgiving!

There IS time and space between the two - not only in which to catch your breath, but to reorient yourself and your household. In the rhythm of the Church year, this holy time and space (Advent) is known as a season of preparation. For centuries, people of faith have used the four weeks preceding Christmas to prepare not only for the Christ-child, but to allow their hearts to experience solace in the deepest possible way our human form can fathom. There are indeed names for that solace: Hope. Peace. Joy. Love. These are the themes that Advent refocuses us on year after year.

For sure, being mindful of each theme is a wonderful act of self-discipline and self-care - but if you're anything like me (and I'm guessing you are!), with each January 1st, I'm occasionally left wondering where I missed the boat. I intentionally limited my shopping and spending; I politely turned down at least half the invitations I received. I planned meals well in advance to eliminate kitchen stress. But the season came and went and I'm left wondering why or how it passed me by!

To be completely transparent with you, it took me more than five decades to realize what was happening: even though I had finally learned to simplify and slow down during Advent, my focus - honestly - was still on everything and everybody *but* Christ. Oh, we read about Christ, we sing and pray about Christ, we light candles and put up Christmas trees to honor Christ, but how do we tease apart all the actions we take that are *about* Christ...versus Christ himself?

Friends, I wish I had a tried-and-true answer kit for you, complete with instructions for ensuring you meet the Christ child this year. But I suspect the answer(s) for one of you may be quite different for another of you. I also suspect you will know it, unquestionably, when it happens. My hope and my prayer for each of you this season is that your hearts "feel strangely warmed" - to use John Wesley's phrase - by the gift of the Christ child himself, and that you will experience this gift as part of your faith family. If you have been away but are wanting to return, this is truly the best time of year to do so. I can assure you, you will be welcomed back with open arms! Likewise, if you have siblings, neighbors, or cousins, etc. who you've been hoping will come back - now is the time to remind them that the best way to predict the future is to create it together.

May God bless your heart and your home this Advent season,

Becca

Pastor Becca

What's Happening



Christmas Joy Offering – Prepare The Way -- The Perfect Gift



We will be receiving the Christmas Joy Offering throughout Advent, starting on December 1st and ending on December 24th. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need, as well as developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges, and equipping communities of color. Envelopes will be available at the church for your gift. Please prayerfully consider a gift because if we all give a little, it adds up to a lot!

Christmas Remembrances – Two Options

The Board of Deacons is once again accepting monetary gifts as a way of remembering or honoring loved ones during this holiday season. Please call the church office **no later than Monday, Dec. 16th** if you're interested in this option. If you are writing a check, please make it payable to:

The Board of Deacons.



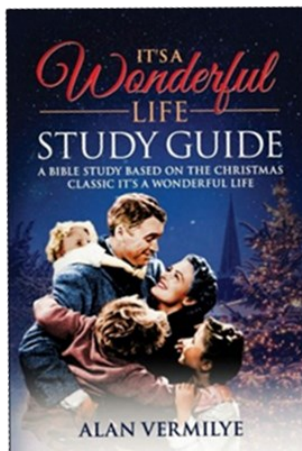
Also, the worship committee will be offering white poinsettias as a way of remembering or honoring loved ones. The plants are in 6 ½ inch pots, at a cost of \$10.50 each. If you would like to order one (or more), please call the church office **no later than Monday, Dec. 16th**. If you are paying for the poinsettias by check, please make it payable to: The United Presbyterian Church of New Kensington.



ADVENT BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP GROUP

Our Bible Studies always lead to good discussion and this one – based on *It's a Wonderful Life* - promises to do the same: *"On the surface, this beloved holiday classic reminds us how easily we can become distracted from what is truly meaningful in life. But on a deeper level, the film conveys the delicate notion that the choices we make in life have consequences beyond our own particular existence."*

We will gather each **Mon. afternoon at 4pm from Nov. 25 – Dec. 23.** (and please come even if you don't make the 11/25 one; it will be super easy to catch up!)



The Bulletin Board



REQUEST FOR DEHUMIDIFIER(S)

Do you happen to have a dehumidifier at home that you no longer use? We would gratefully take it off your hands! The downstairs areas at church would benefit tremendously from 2-3 dehumidifiers keeping the moisture at

bay. If you have one you might be willing to donate to TUPCNK, please let Lynn Crumley know and we will happily pick it up and transport. Thank you!!



December

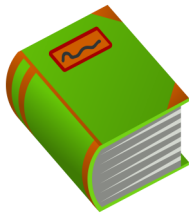
Lily Bosak	12/03
Robert Schulz, Jr.	12/04
Judy Folk	12/05
Karen Grillo	12/10
Brenda Wilson	12/13
Brock Shipman	12/14
Elowyn Bulman	12/15
Kristin Beckes	12/18
Andrea Guido	12/19
Liz Deringer	12/21
BettyLou Waterloo	12/23
Nicholas Szanto	12/30
Jordan Titera	12/30

Interested in online giving to the church?

Naturally, we want to make it as easy as possible for our members and friends to support the church, but we need some idea as to potential interest. If online giving is your preference, please call or email Mary Ellen to let us know. That will help us determine the path forward. Thank you!



Book Club Schedule 6:30 pm, Church Library



Dec. 4th — We are suggesting that each person read a Christmas book and share what they liked about the book.

January 22nd—Book to be decided in December.

The **Prayer Shawl Group** is meeting **Wednesday, December 4th at 1:00** in the Library.

We don't just knit, we fellowship!

Come, enjoy some treats and renew old friendships (or make new ones)!



UPCOMING EVENTS



WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS TEA Sunday, December 8

We will meet in the Fellowship Hall after worship. This is a wonderful tradition that you won't want to miss! A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.



Adult MeeTUP Friday, December 6 6:00 pm

The Adult MeeTUP is having a Christmas gathering in the back room of Gunny's Lounge, 902 McCandless St, New Kensington. Please join us for holiday fun!



LIVE NATIVITY SCENE

On **Saturday, Dec. 14 (3-5 pm)**, we will be welcoming the band of blessed animals who got to witness the birth of Christ in the manger! This wonder-filled activity will take place in the church's vacant lot (several lots down from the church on the 5th Ave side). Visitors will be able to pet the animals and enjoy some hot cocoa and cookies. Invite your children, grandchildren, neighbors, etc.- but it's not **only** for children! Come, and imagine that remarkable beginning!



CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST POT LUCK STYLE!

Sunday, December 22 at 9:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall

This holiday breakfast is a long-standing tradition and a wonderful time to reconnect with friends and members who aren't able to join us during other months of the year. So invite your children, grandchildren, siblings, neighbors, etc. and start thinking now about which of your favorite breakfast casseroles, sweet rolls, coffee cakes, or other yummys you want to share! After we eat, we'll play a holiday-themed game or two and enjoy each other's fellowship!



Christmas Eve CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

After four weeks preparing for the Coming of the Christ Child, Advent will culminate with our traditional **Christmas Eve Candlelight** Service at **7 pm** in the sanctuary, **Dec. 24**. We look forward to this holy time and encourage you to invite your loved ones, friends, & neighbors!



Deacon's Report

November 9th Food Bank

- 103 Households: 22 New, 26 Senior Boxes, 11 Doubles
- 2 Birthday Bags
- We had 22 volunteers, working a total of 76 hours.

December Food Bank

Truck Delivery - December 5
Distribution - December 7

Food Pantry / Cooler Ministry Wish List

- Jelly (plastic jars)
- Applesauce, Juice (plastic jars)
- Spaghetti Sauce (plastic jars)
- Canned potatoes
- Canned Soup (non-condensed)
- Cereal
- Canned Tuna
- Individually packaged crackers, chips

Funeral Dinners - None

Next Deacon Meeting: December 10, 2024
@7:00pm

Submitted by Amy Grillo Dameron - Deacon Secretary

Prayer List: Please keep in mind that we will keep folks on the prayer list for six weeks unless otherwise notified.


- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Betty Tylinski* | Jackie Chckerella |
| Lou Ann Burford* | Gary Chickerella |
| Betty Lou Sharick* | Marge Landfried |
| Bobby Long* | Amy Edwards |
| Lou Ann Burford* | Ray Pinson & Marissa |

- Military personnel & first responders
- Youth and young adults
- First responders and foster families

*Denotes those who are home bound and nursing home residents.

Please call the office to let us know if anyone is in the hospital OR if you would like to receive a pastoral visit from either a deacon or Pastor Becca.

If you would like to add someone to the prayer chain, please call the church at 724-339-6618 with your request. You may also notify any of the following:

	Charlotte Claypool Cheri Mosley Gloria Lauffer Robin Sorch
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Highlights of Session Meeting on Nov. 11, 2024, 6:30 in the Chapel

There are 136 members on the Active Roll. The Advent study will be held on Mondays at 4:00 PM. It will run for five weeks from November 25 through December 23.

Marlo James and Ana Clara Titera will be baptized on December 1, 2024. The Women's Christmas Tea will be on December 8, 2024. The Live Nativity is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 14.

The Church will be decorated for Christmas on Saturday, November 30, 2024 and the decorations will be taken down on Saturday, January 11, 2025. If you are interested in helping, please contact Donna McLaughlin.

The poinsettia order forms and the Deacon remembrance/honor forms will be available on Sunday, December 8, 2024. The poinsettias are white, six and a half inches, and cost \$10.50. The Christmas pot-luck breakfast is on Sunday, December 22, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. Marge Landfried is donating her spinet piano to TUPCNK.

The 25 percent of the Peace Offering that is for local use will be donated to TUPCNK's Community Outreach and Engagement Committee. There will not be a January newsletter. The next Stated Joint Session and Deacons Meeting will be on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel.

Marie S. Davis

Marie S. Davis, Clerk of Session

DECEMBER 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 1st Sun. Advent 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Worship Christmas Joy Offering starts	2 10:00 Care Group 4:00 Bible Study 6:30 AA	3 10:00 Care Group 4:00 Bible Study 6:30 AA	4 1:00 Shawl Group 6:30 Book Club	5 9:00 Food 	6 Office closed	7 9:00 Food Bank Clients 
8 2nd Sun. Advent 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Worship 12:00 Women's Tea	9 10:00 Care Group 4:00 Bible Study 6:30 AA	10 6:30 Annual Joint Meeting of Session and Deacons	11 Office closed	12 Office closed	13 Office closed	14 3:00-5:00 Live Nativity Scene in the church's vacant lot
15 3rd Sun. Advent 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Worship Deadline for Poinsettia order	16 10:00 Care Group 4:00 Bible Study 6:30 AA	17 Office closed	18 Office closed	19 Office closed	20 Office closed	21 Office closed
22 4th Sun. Advent 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Worship 9:30 Congregation-wide Potluck	23 10:00 Care Group 4:00 Bible Study 6:30 AA	24 Office closed 7:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day Office closed 	26 Office closed	27 Office closed	28 Office closed
29 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Worship	30 10:00 Care Group 6:30 AA	31 New Year's Eve Office closed	1  Office closed	Office closed	Office closed	Office closed

**From the TUPCNK
Newsletter Staff:**

Reminder: There will not be a January 2025 newsletter. Our next newsletter will be published for February 2025.



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