



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



February 2025 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

(In Two Parts)

Dear church family and friends,

As I write, it is a ridiculous -11° outside! I know not only the frigid temperatures have been difficult for many of you, but watching the fire devastation in CA, uncertainty surrounding national political changes, caregiving for loved ones, personal illnesses, etc. have taken a toll. Please be sure you're taking care of yourself and staying connected – not only to the church family - but to friends, neighbors, and loved ones. It's too easy to isolate when we're going through a hard time; that's what many of us have learned to do...but people need people! In fact, according to many theologians, that's why we were created—to love and support one another!

So as you go about your daily tasks in this harsh season of limited light and abundant cold, I encourage you to keep yourself bundled up, make it a goal to talk to at least two people every day, and take the time to really savor a hot meal or cup of coffee as often as you can. Finally, in the words of the old benediction: *live simply, love generously, pray daily, and leave everything else to God.*

Light and warmth will indeed return!

Review and What's Next

I realize many of you who read our newsletter probably do not also read our Annual Report, so I want to offer you an extremely abbreviated snapshot of 2024 and where we're headed in 2025:

- ◆“Frugal Yet Intentional” would accurately describe nearly every decision we made in 2024! We've successfully cut costs in numerous ways (e.g. doing away with the third phone/fax line, ensuring our boiler runs only at specific times of specific days of the week, having only our front parking lot plowed when it snows, keeping one general contractor on retainer instead of multiple specialized ones, being blessed with employees who regularly take on far more than their jobs call for, and several church members who have essentially covered what would normally be a paid position)! We've also re-committed ourselves to ensuring the congregation is kept current of our revenue versus expenses on a regular basis.
- ◆That said, we received significantly more in pledges for 2025 than we have in a good while – and for that, we are so deeply grateful! Your commitment to this church, and all that it stands for, is both inspiring and humbling. There is much work yet to be done, and this church continues to be an invaluable asset to both our neighborhood and the larger community.
- ◆As I've said many times, the collective life of a church nearly always mirrors the majority of the lives of those comprising it. That is to say, if the church had a primary focus on children and youth 25 years ago, that's primarily because so many of the members at that time had children and youth at home! And since our congregation no longer fits that demographic, we must continue to discern the plan our Creator God has for us and how to faithfully use the resources we have.

(cont'd)

*Photos from our
Christmas Fellowship
Breakfast*



(cont'd)

- ◆The church building itself is probably our most significant resource. Session has been judiciously prioritizing and investing in repairs/replacements that will safely allow us to continue offering the building to other groups, non-profits, etc. For example, we just invested in upgrading the lighting in the rear parking lot, increasing the safety not only of church members, but other groups who use our building and those we may be able to attract in the future!
- ◆Both Session and our Board of Deacons have had the opportunity to engage in a SWOT analysis of the church, identifying our perceived “strengths and weaknesses,” as well as potential “opportunities and threats.” Taking stock of all four of these variables is a crucial part of planning for the future of the church and in the next couple months, **all** members will be invited to so - so please keep an eye out for that date to be posted!
- ◆I continue to be encouraged by your faithfulness in worship, your desire for and participation in Bible Study groups, your commitment to both our Food Bank *and* food pantry ministries, and the unwavering commitment of our Elders and Deacons and all of our standing committees. (And our newest committee, Community Outreach & Engagement, fulfilled its mission “to a tee” by celebrating Independence Day with more than 40 bikers from the Slow Roll Program, and hosting a Live Nativity in December enjoyed by nearly 75 people!)

There will be more to come, friends, but for now - keep the faith, knowing God always has a plan!

Blessings,
Pastor Becca

The Bulletin Board

Prayer List: Please keep in mind that we will keep folks on the prayer list for five or six weeks unless Otherwise requested.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Bobby Long* | Jackie Chickerella |
| Betty Tylinski* | Gary Chckerella |
| Lou Ann Burford* | First responders |
| Betty Lou Sharick* | Military personnel |
| Marge Landfried* | Foster families |
| Mildred Wagner | Youth & young adults |
| Tom and Kandi Siddle | |

*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.



January 2025

Richard Gwillim	1/4
Joseph Conte	1/5
Tyler Wilson	1/6
Wendy Hartz	1/8
Shelby Aylsworth	1/9
Aaron Edwards	1/10
Logan Slagle	1/12
Devon Lynn Schulz	1/13
Cynthia Bondra	1/15
Randy Schultz	1/17
Aimee Swetof-Shaffer	1/18
Beth Westlake	1/21
Brady Warchol	1/21
Lynn Crumley	1/25
John Williams	1/25
Nancy Stewart	1/30

February 2025

David Crumley	2/2
Robert Manley	2/5
Diane Swetof	2/5
Jayne Polena	2/5
Aubrey Newcomer	2/8
Cullen Yates	2/10
Sarah Korb	2/12
Jimmy Gwillim	2/19
Mike Kovitch	2/25
Nancy Deiseroth	2/26
Jacquelyn Montgomery	2/27
Kathryn Whitacre	2/28

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

Interested in online giving to the church? We've heard from a small number of you, but would like to hear from more!! 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!



UPCOMING EVENTS

The **Prayer Shawl Group** is meeting **Wednesday, Feb. 5th at 1:00** in the Library. We don't just knit, we fellowship! Come, enjoy some treats and renew old friendships (or perhaps make new ones)!



**Book Club, 6:30 pm
in the Church Library**

February 26th—*A Mercy* by Toni Morrison

March 26th—*All We Ever Wanted* by Emily Giffin

February 9, 2025

“SOUPER” BOWL SUNDAY

Start collecting your food donations and loose change for our food pantry now! Come Super Bowl Sunday, the “winning” football team will be determined by how much food/cash makes it into each team’s soup pot!



Date Change



For its February meeting, Session will meet immediately after Worship on **Sunday, February 9.**

Adult Meet-up



Adult meetup fellowship group will be **Friday, Feb.**

21, 6:00 pm at Kuhns

Crossroads Restaurant,

1127 PA-356, Leechburg, PA 15656. Come join us! Please contact Stacey so she can make reservations for the group.

*NOTE: Because of Souper Bowl Sunday, we'll have church in the **Fellowship Hall at 11 a.m. February 9**, and EVERYONE is invited to wear their favorite team's jersey or colors! This service will be both worshipful AND fun!

Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent will be here before you know it:

March 5.

We will plan to have a service that evening and a Lenten Bible Study will be kicking off around that date too.

Lent



January 4th Food Bank

- ◆ 65 Households: 8 New, 22 Senior Boxes, 12 Doubles
- ◆ 0 Birthday Bags
- ◆ We had 26 volunteers, working a total of 84.5 hours.

February 2025 Food Bank

Truck Delivery - February 6
Distribution - February 8

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: February 11, 2025
@6:30pm

Submitted by Amy Grillo Dameron
Deacon Secretary

January Session Meeting Summary:

Statistical Report: There are 134 members on the Active Roll.
Death - Marian "Mamie" Nixon, Dec. 24, 2024

Marge Landfried's piano is to be delivered January 14, 2025. Congregation contributed to pay delivery fee, extra monies to be used for tuning piano. Special Offerings were approved for 2025: Souper Bowl, One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace, and Christmas Joy.

Communion Schedule was approved for 2025: February 2, March 2, March 5 (Ash Wednesday), April 6, April 17 (Maundy Thursday); May 4, June 1; July 6, August 3, September 7, October 5, November 2, and November 30 (First Sunday of Advent).

Rev. Siddle will be out of the office from February 10-February 17 (including Sunday, February 16). Guest Minister will preach on Sunday, February 16. The next Session meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 9** after the Worship Service.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna L. McLaughlin, Clerk of Session

December Session Meeting Summary (since there was no January newsletter):

There are 135 members on the Active Roll.

Death -- Amy Waterloo Edwards - November 19, 2024

Baptisms -- Marlo James and Ana Clara Titera – December 1, 2024

The Church's Christmas decorations will be taken down on Saturday, January 11, 2025. If you are interested in helping, please contact Donna McLaughlin.

Year-End Mission funds are available. If you know of a group in need, please contact Julia Yockey.

The back parking lot lights will be replaced/reconfigured.




The next Stated Session Meeting will be on Monday, January 13, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie S. Davis

Marie S. Davis, Clerk of Session

February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Communion 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Worship	3 10:00 Care Group 10:00 Garden Club 7:30 AA	4 3:30-5:30 Sonward	5 1:00 Shawl Group in Library	6 9:00 Food Truck  3:30-5:30 Sonward	7	8 9:00 Food Bank Clients 
9 SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Informal worship in the Fellowship Hall 12:00 Session	10 10:00 Care Group 7:30 AA	11 3:30-5:30 Sonward 6:30 Deacons	12	13 3:30-5:30 Sonward	14  Happy Valentine's Day	15
16 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Worship	17 10:00 Care Group 7:30 AA	18 3:30-5:30 Sonward	19	20 3:30-5:30 Sonward	21 6:30 Adult Meet-up at Kuhns Crossroads Restaurant	22
23 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Worship	24 10:00 Care Group 7:30 AA	25 3:30-5:30 Sonward	26 6:30 Book Club A Mercy by Toni Morrison	27 3:30-5:30 Sonward	28	



Southern California Wildfires

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is in communication with the affected areas to offer resources in the aftermath of the fires. We pray for all those affected, from individuals and families to entire neighborhoods, from the wildlife to the very land itself; we pray for swift containment and the safety of first responders.

GIVE: Gifts can be made online at pcusa.org/CAfires, by phone at 800-728-7228, ext. 5885 or by check payable to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with "PDA-CF25-BI" written on the memo line and mailed to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264 or to the Presbytery Office.

ACT: Assemble Gift of the Heart kits for survivors in the affected areas. For more information, go to pcusa.org/GOHkits.

PRAY: God, our refuge and strength, you are an ever-present help in trouble. You see the devastation caused by the California wildfires. You hear the cries of loss and know the exhaustion of those waiting and helping. For those forced to flee, grant rest. For those fighting fires, grant strength. For those mourning, grant comfort. For those still in danger, grant protection. May your Church be a presence of hope in Christ's name Amen.

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