

# THE LISTENING POST

DECEMBER  
2025



## Pastor Niki's Ponderings

A couple of years ago, at a routine doctor's appointment, I was brought up short by a very non-routine question: "In the past month, have you worried about where your next meal would come from?"

"What?" I asked. I think the nurse sensed my confusion. She explained that this was a new question they were asking in the office to all patients, no matter what they were there for or what their employment status. This was during the period of the COVID pandemic when there were still some struggling industries, people were unable to work, and supplemental income from unemployment was returning to pre-pandemic levels. Food insecurity was on the rise for many patients, and so the office wanted to make sure they had ways to connect people with community resources. While our family was not in need of those resources, I was grateful to see the list had many possible resources to turn to, including some local churches. And even now, a few years later, this question continues to be asked when I go to the doctor's office. For that, I give thanks.

It's awful that food insecurity is so common (especially in these last few months, as we have seen a greater need to be met by our food banks, pantries, etc.) Good nutrition, daily sustenance, it's essential to making sure we are able to live our lives, do physical tasks, focus on education and work, etc.

We also face an insecurity of another kind in our society, of a spiritual nature. There is an epidemic of loneliness, people who are struggling to find community and figure out where they belong in an increasingly divided world. We don't always think so much about that, particularly since it's not always a "life or death" physical/medical need, but the struggle with it is very real for those in the midst of it.

John Calvin, considered to be one of the forebears of the reformed theology that we as Presbyterians believe, held a high view of one of the ways in which we gather as a community of believers: around the table for the sacrament of communion. He believed we should gather and have communion at least once a week, for he argued that the Lord's Supper is the means by which God feeds the soul of the believer. For him, spiritual sustenance was just as important as physical sustenance. We see examples of this, even in scripture. In fact, many of the most significant stories from the life of Jesus Christ centered around a meal: the Last Supper, a meal with Zacchaeus, dining at Simon's, teaching while Martha prepared food. I mean, even as a newborn, Jesus himself was placed in a manger, a feeding trough for animals, in the town of Bethlehem (Hebrew for "house of bread.")

This Advent season, we'll talk more about what it means for Jesus to be the one who sustains us, spiritually and physically. How a baby in a feeding trough, born in the house of bread, continues to feed this world that is hungry for hope, peace, joy, and love. Amen.

Blessings, Pastor Niki <><

**IMPORTANT: There will be an Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 14 at 12:00 p.m. for the purpose of Election of Officers and reception of the 2026 budget.**

1. Devi Grant
4. Connor Lopovsik
5. Heather Heller
7. Aaron Varga
9. Hunter Hanus, John Moats, Jody Smoyer
12. Gunner Hanus
14. Josh Hanus, Sarah McCormack, Joyce Mollick
16. Nick Arnoldy, Kathy Wilson
18. Riley Gartely
19. Tyler Guthrie
20. James Detman, Declan McManus
22. Candy George
24. Alonzo Beard
25. June Thompson
26. Kim Bush
30. Maddie Smoyer, Gladys Varga
31. Luke Snedecor

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**



**All kids are Welcome each Sunday @ 10 AM in our NEW classrooms! The holidays and Jesus' birthday are right around the corner. Give a friend a special gift – invite them to Sunday School to join us in our happiest of seasons!**

**Kids' Christmas Program, etc!**

Saturday, Dec. 20, 10 a.m. – play dress rehearsal

Saturday, Dec. 20 @ noon – Kids' Christmas Party "Happy Birthday, Jesus"

**Sunday, Dec. 21 (11 a.m.) during worship, wear your pjs, get comfy in the pew, and enjoy our Kids' Christmas Play**



## **MISSION**

**ATTENTION:  
COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL:  
APPLY AT FOOD BANKS, MEALS ON  
WHEELS, FOOD 4 KIDS, HABITAT FOR  
HUMANITY  
*You get the idea!***

**Formally The Hat and Mitten Tree, this year's tree will be a Sweatpants Tree! The Apollo-Ridge school nurse has indicated a need for neutral colored sweatpants, in all elementary sizes, to accommodate all types of mishaps during school hours. Your donations will be accepted through January 15 along with the "white gifts." Thanks!  
Local Mission Happenings...**

- ✓ Remember to pass along the message while you DO the mission. Meals-on-Wheels (412-400-0975) –

drivers, cooks, prep people daily on M –  
W – F.

St. Vincent de Paul (724-478-1113) M-Sat

Food bank opportunities:

- Dec. 5 (Fri) Westmoreland County Food Bank – 7:45 AM – St. James Catholic Church Activity Center (behind the Church)
- Dec. 15 (Mon), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (packaging) – 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford, right side, around back
- Dec.. 17 (Wed), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (distribution) volunteers at 7:30 – 8:00 AM - public at 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford (see above)

The Mission Ministry  
Team would like to  
extend its community

outreach by offering “Welcome” and “New Baby” baskets to residents new to the area and to those with an addition to their family. Although still in the early stages, we are asking for your help in identifying families that might fit these categories. Please message/contact Pam McMunn at 724-664-8303

### COMMUNITY COMPASSION

### **AUPC Emergency Fund**

**NOVEMBER FOOD** - Food - 5 families; 10 bags of food; 4 Naser vouchers; 1 Gift Cert for Nasers for \$300

**NOVEMBER FINANACIAL** - 3 families; Rent - \$300; Utilities - \$300; Misc - \$175

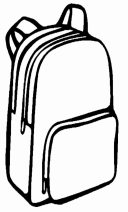
Additional pantry food - \$99.25 (restock cost)

\*Candy and Ron donated a new set of shelves for the pantry..

We are still at 56 kids enrolled. Our last packing day until the new year is Wednesday, December 3 and the next packing day will be January 7 depending on weather. We received an anonymous donation of \$500 from a client of McCoy Jones Insurance and McCoy Jones added an additional \$200. The monetary and food donations just keep coming in--"Praise God". Let me know if you have any questions.

~Candy

*Christmas Concert benefiting Food 4 Kids will be held at Apollo United on Saturday, Dec. 6 at 6:00 PM, Free Will Offering.*



**THANK YOU,  
THANK YOU,  
THANK YOU!**

**Thanks to all of  
you amazing  
people, who  
together,  
donated \$505 for**

**the Apollo-Ridge Area Food Bank Turkey  
Fund! Only one thing left to say:**

**GOBBLE GOBBLE (Merry Christmas)**

### MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH

### **WE'RE BACK!**

**Free Community Program**

**- Everyone Welcome**

**Friday, Dec. 12,**

**6:30 PM**

**KIDS KRAFTS**

**has a spot for YOU!**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Friday,**



Sept -Jun

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

**PW Quarterly Meeting –  
Saturday, December 13 @ 9:30 AM  
Regular Meeting**

If you're looking for unique cards for any occasion, please check out the variety available in the vestibule made by our own\_Craft Ladies. Cost is 3 for \$2 or \$.75 each.

## STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

### **WHERE WE STAND at the END of OCTOBER 2025**

October Income: \$13,306.68  
October Expenses: \$10,005.60  
August Income to Expenses: \$3,301.28  
YTD Income: \$101,243.20  
YTD Expenses: \$114,734.29  
YTD Income to Expenses: -\$13,491.09

**Don't forget . . You may  
purchase/sponsor a  
bulletin, at any time during  
the year , to  
remember/honor a loved  
one. Donations of \$20 per  
bulletin are requested.**

**Your donation will be used to defray  
copying costs of our weekly bulletin.**

## WORSHIP AND MUSIC



**SUNDAYS 11:00 AM**  
Join us in person or  
livestream on YouTube

  
**December 7, 2025**

## **ADVENT 2025 THEME “FROM THE MANGER”**

### **Advent Readers and Candle Lighters**

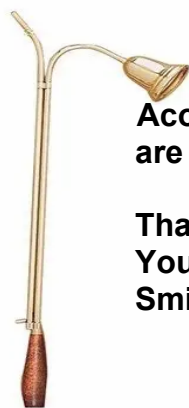
**November 30 ~ *The Pityk Family***

**December 7 ~ *The Zukas Family***

**December 14 ~ *The Carwile Family***

**December 21 ~ *The Kaminski Family***

**December 24 ~ *The Motosicky Family***



**Acolytes are underway and  
are doing a spectacular job!**

**Thank you for your service!  
You make the congregation  
Smile every Sunday!**

**We're  
Back!**

Please  
contact Miss Shelly if you're interested in The  
Children's Bell Choir.

**Prayer List!** How it works: Please list prayer concerns on the back of the attendance card found in your bulletin. We will place these names on our "Immediate" prayer list for three weeks. The *newest names will appear in italics*. On the third week we will **'bold' the name**. The prayers of concern will then move to the "Continuing" list and will remain there three more weeks and then rotate off, unless otherwise requested. If you don't see a name that had previously been there and that person still requires prayer, please list the name again. Also, please list spelling corrections, if needed.

**IMMEDIATE** Debbie on her husband's death, Dave Highfield, Ron in Church ☺, Dolores' fall, Sanctuary at Christmas ☺, Ken Bowman, Jess's grandfather, Christmas Tea JOY!, Melinda here ☺, Family of Frank Lombardi, Mary, KVCB ☺, Ronan, Ashley, Dan Pepler, Wendy, Ashley, Patty Pavetti, Janelle, Danny, Doris Patterson, Perona family, **Laura's brother-in-law, people of Jamaica, Jeff, Shirley Jackson.**

**CONTINUING** John Moats, Diane & Jim Detman on the loss of Diane's father, Kim, Ashley & Ben, Ronan, Luke, new baby, Melinda, Shannan K., Elaine Newton, Eddie, Ed Bortz, **Knox Kanish, Debbie, Vinny, Chynna Finoli and CJ Williams, \*JOY for Missy.**

### **ONGOING**

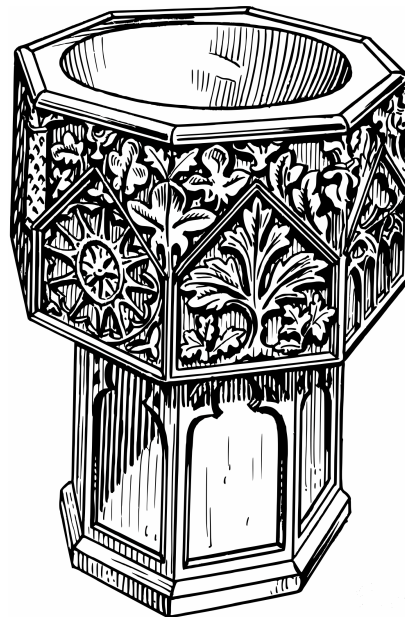
Nora, Eric Ribar, Missy, Katie, Donnie Riggle, Gary Harkcom, Bill & Linda Crabtree, Frank Kovak, Josh Hanus, Shannon Pruss, Chris Hilker, Carol Gallagher, Linda Gould, Snedecor family, Alan Shockey, Bonnie Machak, Lani Knox, Nick Arnoldy, Benjamin Mumaw, Sean George.

**MINISTRY** All those affected by the Coronavirus, flu, and RSV and those working in the health care field, first responders, research, and government. Food 4 Kids, AUPC Deacon's Emergency Fund, Support for our church, EPR Mugombwa; Victims of violence and natural disasters; President Donald Trump, our country, other world leaders, our church and its leaders, the war & military personnel, wounded military at home and in hospitals, terrorist victims, Kiskiminetas' Rwanda Partnership

### **Jessica Carwile**

Wife of Gregory Carwile and  
Mother of Adelynn & Claire

Jess also became a member of  
AUPC on this occasion.



Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and  
the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon these  
your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have  
raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain  
them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an  
inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to  
will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to  
love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all  
your works. Amen.

**Congratulations  
To those Baptized on  
Sunday, November 30., 2025**

**Nolan Bryan Mascio  
Lucas Vince Masio**  
Sons of Bryan & Sheila Mascio  
of New Jersey

