

THE LISTENING POST

MARCH 2026



Pastor Niki's Ponderings

I know the Olympics aren't everyone's thing, but I have loved watching the Winter Games this year. I usually enjoy them more than the Summer Olympics (Geoff prefers those—something about all the running and track-and-field events!).

I saw a post from a parent who said her son also prefers the Winter Olympics. When she asked why, he replied, "The summer ones are all about being the fastest or going the furthest. In the winter, it's like you're defying death." After watching the skeleton races with Lyanna—face-first on a sled at 70+ mph—and seeing her wide-eyed "whoa!" expression, I have to admit he may be onto something.

But what has struck me most this time around isn't just the daring athleticism. It's the stories.

There's the comeback of USA figure skater Alysa Liu, who stepped away from the sport when the pressure began to harm her mental health, only to return on her own terms and win gold. There's the joy shining on the face of Japan's Yuma Kagiyama during his short program, and the mutual respect he and USA's Ilia Malinin showed one another in intense competition. There's Flavor Flav enthusiastically supporting women's sports. There are the Kelce brothers stepping in to help the family of Laila Edwards attend the games, where she became the first Black woman to represent the U.S. in Olympic ice hockey. There are the lighthearted moments with Elmo and multiple Olympians. And, of course, the Jamaica national bobsled team. Support. Laughter. Encouragement. Joy.

No matter where we are from or what language we speak, we all need these things—and we can offer them to one another.

A few weeks ago, I officiated a funeral for a woman I had never met, serving a family I had never encountered before. They called the church because they were seeking a sacred space to say goodbye to their matriarch. Her death was unexpected, and the void she left behind was immense. She was originally from the

Philippines, with loved ones there, and had been living in New York City, with loved ones there as well.

So we gathered in the sanctuary—some physically present, others joining through screens and phone lines. Through stories told in multiple languages, through tears and laughter, through shared memories and food prepared in the church kitchen (which smelled wonderful), we offered one another support, encouragement, and even moments of joy in the midst of grief.

Psalm 9 reminds us that the Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. In Joshua, God says, “Be strong and courageous...for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” And in the Gospel of John, Jesus assures his disciples that no one can take away their joy.

May we be people who bring encouragement, strength, and joy to our community.

Blessings,
Pastor Niki <><



1. Alex Kaminski
5. Chloe Shupe
6. Vivian Shaeffer
8. Stanley Travis
12. Don Dick
16. Ed Bortz
18. Candi Kaminski
19. Katrina Koenig
22. Carl Zukas
23. Tatiana Shurina, Jackson Snedecor
30. Sean George, Cassie Snedecor

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Every Sunday ~ 10:00 AM

After Sunday School, join your family in the Sanctuary or visit the PrayGround! Be sure to take advantage of the Kid's Table in the vestibule where you'll be sure to find plenty of quiet activities for you to do during worship service.



*Let's
Party*

On Palm Sunday, March 29 at 10:00 AM, all kids are welcome to join us during the Sunday School hour for an EASTER PARTY!!! Those attending will enjoy making a craft, hearing a story and eating a snack before entering the sanctuary while waving palms in celebration of Palm Sunday.

Summer Church Camp is right around the corner... Check out our Kid's table in the vestibule for information on Camp(s) Lambec, Pine Springs, and

Lutherlyn. You may also check any of the camp's websites on-line. Many camps are now offering an "Early Bird Registration" discount. Ask about AUPC's contribution to campers!



MISSION



- ✓ 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:

- March 6 (Fri) Westmoreland County Food Bank – 7:45 AM – St. James Catholic Church Activity Center (behind the Church)
- March 16 (Mon), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (packaging) – 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford, right side, around back
- March 18 (Wed), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (distribution) volunteers at 7:30 – 8:00 AM - public at 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford (see above)

Have a new neighbor or new baby in the neighborhood

The Mission

MinistryTeam 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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

Consider volunteering on an AUPC Committee . . . Here's why:

"Volunteering is at the very core of being a human. No one has made it through life without someone else's help." *Heather French Henry*

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless." *Sherry Anderson*

"Volunteers do not have more time --they just have more heart." *Anonymous*

You don't need to be in charge ~ Just lend a hand! See Pastor Niki or call the office!

COMMUNITY COMPASSION



AUPC Emergency Fund

End of January 2026 Assistance Totals:

Utilities: \$238.15, Rent: \$600.00, 2 Families helped with food.



We currently have 57 kids enrolled in the Food 4 Kids program. We have had new volunteers come to help on packing day and new volunteers helping to deliver the food. We are thrilled to have them and encourage anyone to help with this much needed program. Also, Pastor Ericka from Apollo Free Methodist has been lending a hand. **Our next packing days are scheduled for Tuesday, March 10 and Monday, March 30 at 3:00 pm. Your support is always appreciated.**



Candy

MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH



Free Community Program - Everyone Welcome
Friday, March 13 ,
6:30 PM KIDS KRAFTS
has a spot for YOU!
2nd Friday, Sept -Jun
BRING A FRIEND!



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

**PW Quarterly Meeting –
Saturday, March 14 @ 9:30 AM
Regular Meeting**

~Planning Ahead: Spring Salad Bar – Saturday, April 18~



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.

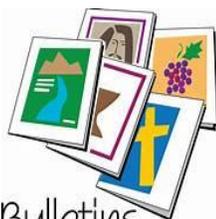
STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

WHERE WE STAND at the END of DECEMBER 2025



January Income: \$7,045.59
December Expenses: \$11,863.29
January Income to Expenses: -\$4,817.70
YTD Income: \$7,045.59
YTD Expenses: \$11,863.29
YTD Income to Expenses: -\$4,817.70

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.



Bulletins

\$\$ PER CAPITA \$\$
WE WILL GLADLY ACCEPT YOUR 2026 PER
CAPITA, \$40.66, AT ANY TIME DURING THE YEAR!
Stewardship & Finance Team

WORSHIP AND MUSIC



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

Communion
March 1, 2026



Join us for Worship on
Palm Sunday, March 29 at
11:00 AM.

Children's Easter Party 10
AM



**AUPC Acolytes have their
2026 schedule and are ready
to light the way.**

Maybe you weren't aware, but we
have 12 fine young people as acolytes.

Please let them know you
are appreciative of their service!

*There will be no schedule for the
summer months.*



Ready to Ring!

*AUPC Bell Choir will begin their
practices on Wednesday, March 11
At 6:00 PM.*

*New members welcome!
Contact Peggy Landon.*

Lenten Worship & Luncheons

brought to you by the United Apollo Ministerial Association (UAMA)

				
February 25 12:00pm	March 4 12:00pm	March 11 12:00pm	March 18 12:00pm	March 25 12:00pm
Boiling Springs Presbyterian 1668 PA-56, Spring Church w/Rev. TJ Lucas of Quality Life Svcs. Apollo	Spring Church Lutheran 3623 Lutheran Church Rd w/Rev. Dr. Caroline Clifford of First Evangelical Lutheran - Apollo	New Life Baptist 319 N. 2 nd St., Apollo, w/ Pastor Brad Ferko, EdD, of Spring Church Lutheran	Apollo Free Methodist 1027 PA-56, Apollo, w/Rev. Julie Kolacz of New Beginnings UMC	New Beginnings UMC 1559 PA-56, Apollo, w/Rev. Niki Atkinson of Apollo & Boiling Springs Presbyterian Churches

Still Ringing!



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

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

The 2026 One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering runs from February 18 to April 5, supporting disaster relief, hunger, poverty, and refugee aid worldwide. AUPC will be collecting throughout the dates listed above with the main collection to be on **Palm Sunday, March 29.**

Purpose and Impact

OGHS provides aid to **vulnerable populations globally**, addressing critical needs such as:

Disaster relief

Hunger and poverty alleviation

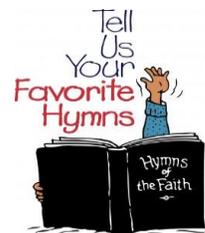
Climate change adaptation

Support for immigrants, migrants, and refugees.

The offering helps provide **safety, sustenance, and hope** to individuals and communities facing these challenges.

"Hymns of our Hearts"

Lots of us have favorite hymns...Pastor Niki wants to know YOURS! This summer, we will have a sermon series to focus on some of your favorite hymns, the scriptures they bring to mind, and what



God is teaching us through them. Here's how to submit your favorite hymns to Pastor Niki for consideration:

1. Write your favorite hymns on the back of the yellow cards in the pew rack, or on a piece of paper, then put them into the offering plate for her to get later.

2. Write a list of your favorite hymns and send via email to pastor@aupc.comcastbiz.net.

3. Write your list and leave it in her mailbox next to the office.

Your favorites don't have to be in our current hymnal. They don't have to be in the English language (but a translation is helpful!) Pastor Niki will tally up the submissions and choose the top 6 for our series. Thank you for your help!

Holy Week Meditation Stations

REFLECT UPON THE EVENTS OF
JESUS' LAST WEEK THROUGH A
SERIES OF PRAYERFUL
EXPERIENCES, ALL AT YOUR
OWN PACE.

**APOLLO UNITED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
401 FIRST ST., APOLLO

SUN. 3/29 - 1PM-4PM
MON. 3/30 - 9:30AM-4PM
TUES. 3/31 - 9:30AM-7PM
WED. 4/1 - 9:30AM-9PM
THUR. 4/2 - 12PM-9PM

He Is Risen!
Celebrate with us on
EASTER morning,
April 5 at 11 AM



Who's Who on SESSION?

Lead by Rev. Niki Atkinson, your current Session Members and their area(s) of service are listed below.

Jessica Carwile ~ Ministry & Mission Teams

Scott Hollabaugh ~ Admin Team Chair & Building & Grounds

Glenna Kanish ~ Ministry Team (combination of Membership & Outreach, Ministry and Christian Ed.)

Pam McMunn ~ Mission

Nancy Russo ~ Mission Team

Amy Shupe ~ Admin Team: Stewardship & Finance Chair, Church Treasurer

Bill Speer ~ Admin Team, Building and Grounds

Laura Uncapher ~ Admin Team & Clerk of Session

Carl Zukas ~ Admin Team, Personnel Chair



You may have had some trouble reaching us recently. It wasn't your fault (or ours)! We had a very antiquated system which had been patched into our internet giving us what's called "VoIP" (voice over

Internet Provider). For longer than 14 years these combined systems worked flawlessly. Until an electrical surge fried the connections. **Then, along came Walt Smail, telephone-guy extraordinaire.** After quite a bit of detective work, trial and error scenarios, and marathon trips from room to room, and floor to floor of the church buildings, Walt reconnected all phone lines to the initial points of entry and we were up and running. We now have full telephone service which includes answering machine capability, fax reception, and 2-lines in and out. **Many thanks to Walt for the telephone work and the numerous other things he assists with at AUPC.** If you need help with anything call W..... no, better not!

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.

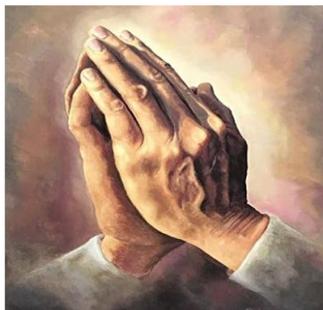
IMMEDIATE *The family of Carl Zukas, Sr., Jeff Kirkman home, Cathy, Chris Martin, Adam, Cate & baby Rosalind ☺, Mel Sylvis, Doris Ann 90th Birthday, Nancy Campitella, Rodger, Shirley Coy, Cate Liska, SueEllen.*

CONTINUING *Joanie, Laurie, family of Larry W., Liam, Kathy Wilson ☺, Grant, Thanks Kaminski, Gizzler & Hollabaughs for shoveling, David Rose, Mary K., Amanda C, Dreana, Diane Chavara, Nancy Reynolds 99 years young!, Dorothy, Carol, Dave, Sue Ellen & Nick, , Shannan, Sara Burke, Jim, Carol, Niki's Dave, Ben & Ashley, Dommy, Missy ☺, Joyce Wildi's Marshall ☺.*

ONGOING

Nora, Eric Ribar, Missy, Katie, Eddie, 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



DID YOU KNOW?

Known as the "Apostle of Ireland", he is the primary patron saint of Ireland, the other patron saints being Brigid of Kildare and Columba. He is also the patron saint of Nigeria.

Patrick was never formally canonized by the Catholic Church, having lived before the current laws were established for such matters. He is venerated as a saint in the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the Church of Ireland (part of the Anglican Communion), and in the Eastern Orthodox Church, where he is regarded as equal-to-the-apostles and Enlightener of Ireland.

The dates of Patrick's life cannot be fixed with certainty, but there is general agreement that he was active as a missionary in Ireland during the fifth century. A recent biography on Patrick shows a late fourth-century date for the saint is possible. According to tradition dating from the early Middle Ages, Patrick was the first bishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, and is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland (despite evidence of some earlier Christian presence on the island), and converting Ireland from paganism in the process.

In Patrick's autobiographical *Confessio*, he writes that when he was about sixteen, he was captured by Irish pirates from his home in Britain and taken as a slave to Ireland. He writes that he lived there for six years as an animal herder before escaping and returning to his family. After becoming a cleric, he returned to spread Christianity in northern and western Ireland. In later life, he served as a bishop, but little is known about where he worked. By the seventh century, he had already come to be revered as the patron saint of Ireland.

Saint Patrick's Day, considered his feast day, is observed on 17 March, the supposed date of his death. It is celebrated in Ireland and among the Irish diaspora as a religious and cultural holiday. In the Catholic Church in Ireland, it is both a solemnity and a holy day of obligation.

