

THE LISTENING POST

SEPTEMBER
2024

Pastor Niki's Ponderings



Martin Luther, often cited as one of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation disliked the Book of James that we find in Scripture. In

fact, he wrote that it was an “epistle of straw...for it has nothing of the nature of the Gospel about it.” Wow. That’s some rough criticism. But it can make sense that he felt that way. The whole basis of the Protestant movement was that we are saved by God’s grace alone, not by works. On the surface, James appears to be all about being saved by works, going against much of what Paul appears to write in his epistles that we have in the Bible. The author of James even wrote “faith without works is dead.” (James 2:26) So why is the Book of James still in our Bible? Why does it matter?

Well, some of this you’ll get to hear more about in worship during the month of September when I spend most of our Sundays on the Book of James. But I’ll give

you a hint...James is not as “cut and dry” as some think it is. Belief in Jesus Christ may appear to be a simple thing to some, but there’s a whole lot that comes with it. And one of the things I appreciate the most about the Book of James is that he digs into that. His whole premise is that while it’s enough to simply believe that we are saved by grace through faith, that isn’t (and shouldn’t!) be the end of our journey. It’s kind of like if you went through confirmation, or even when you graduated from high school. Some people view confirmation as “graduating” from the church. Far from it. Just as we don’t stop learning after we graduate from high school (even if our brains desire a quick break), we certainly don’t stop learning about our faith and growing in our faith after confirmation. We keep reading, having conversations, putting ourselves out there to ask “how can I help?” and “how can I show God’s love to others?” Paul’s writings tell us all about the road. James tells us that the rubber should meet the road.

I’m looking forward to us dreaming and doing more with how the rubber meets the road for our church family in the weeks ahead.

Pastor Niki



3. Shane Guthrie
6. Cathy Piper-Bikle
7. Ron George
10. Deana Waters
14. Gil Filer
16. Cynthia Bidlak, Lani Knox
19. Shirley Dick, Rylee Hannigan
22. Matthew Fulton
27. Ethan Heffernan
29. Linda Ault
30. Bennett Zukas, Maggie Mullooly

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Nursery is available to parents. Young children may attend during worship.



nursery is available to parents, if needed, and the Prayground will be open for little ones or those needing a break from the pew.

as of August 25 and RALLY DAY activities, Sunday School is back! Two classes will be available, upstairs each Sunday during worship. The



We'll be back SOON!



YOUTH GROUP
Returning in November!!

Youth Group Fundraiser!
Held on Sunday, July 14, the kids raised \$224! AUPC Youth Group says

THANK YOU for your support. *Proceeds will benefit Youth programs and activities.*



Sunday school kids had a "Lemonade Stand" fundraiser after worship on Sunday, Aug. 4 to help with Sunday school

program expenses. Lemonade and cookies were for sale and THANKS to our FAITHFUL SUPPORTERS, \$193.60 was raised. WOW!

MISSION

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:

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



After the last counting day/pizza party we realized that we are only ½ way to our goal of a mile of pennies. Thank you for getting us this far and we hope you keep sending us every cent you have (ha ha)! After reaching a mile of pennies, the total will be donated to HAVIN.

Thank you, Christian Ed



Hi Everyone!

Hope all of you had a wonderful summer!

It's time to plan for a new school year for the Food 4 Kids program. I contacted the Principal, Guidance Counselor and Cafeteria Director at A-R and we are a 'GO' for this year--our 7th year!!

We had our planning meeting on August 20 to begin the 7th year of the Food 4 Kids program. Parent applications will be delivered to the school on August 28; our first packing day will be September 25; and the kids first distribution of food will be September 27. We are pleased to have TJ on board to assist in the planning and to learn more about how the program functions.

As always, your support will be greatly appreciated!
Candy

COMMUNITY COMPASSION

June: Food - 2 families; 6 bags of groceries; 4 Naser vouchers

Financial - 1 family; \$300 rent

July: Food - 2 families; 5 bags of groceries

Financial - 4 families; \$616 rent; \$494 utilities = \$1,110

August (as of 8/26): Food - 0

Financial - 2 families;

\$440 rent



CLEAN ~ OP BUCKETS

These much needed buckets, that will remain local, will be "filled" by the month. Each month 2 items will be requested for the buckets. Everyone donating will be

buying the same 2 items. The next month two more items on the list will be selected, and so on, until by November, the bucket(s) will be full. Local tragedies occur with no schedule and no warning. Our schedule will have assistance ready for the unexpected. We will be providing a small gesture that will make an enormous impact to those trying to recover from the unexpected.

September Items: 18-reusable, lightweight multipurpose dry cleaning towels (No terrycloth, microfiber or papertowels. Remove from Package.) 20-28, 35-45 gallon heavy duty or contractor type trash bags on a roll (Remove from package)



Annual Crop Hunger Walk~Roaring Run Trail
in Apollo, Sunday, October 6 ~ 1:00 p.m.

*mark "crop walk" in your check memo

*give in envelope and note "cropwalk"

*give online and note "cropwalk"

Additional Details in October Newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH



Reception following worship with Pastor Mugombwa on Sunday, Sept. 15.

**Bob Reed, Moorehead Place, Rm 137
116 Madison Circle, Indiana PA 15701**



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



Sunday, Sept. 8, 10am (Rain or Shine) @ Owen's Grove. BSPC will join us for this covered dish picnic. Drinks, hot dogs, buns, paper products & condiments will be provided.



KIDS KRAFTS RETURNS THIS FALL! All kids welcome, so bring some friends!

2ND Friday, Sept - Jun

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

PW Quarterly Meeting – Saturday, September 7 @ 9 AM Regular Meeting



SANDWICH & SALAD BAR



PW Annual Fall Sandwich & Salad Bar Friday, September 13 11 AM – 1:30 PM

\$9 PER PERSON INCLUDES SANDWICHES, SALADS, DESSERTS & BEVERAGES.

BEST LUNCH IN THE VALLEY!

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

WHERE WE STAND at the END of JULY 2024



July Income: \$6,230.71
July Expenses: \$10,653.37
July Income to Expenses: \$-4,422.68

YTD Income: \$73,527.81
YTD Expenses: \$81,674.45

YTD Income to Expenses: -\$8,146.64

WORSHIP AND MUSIC



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

Communion
Schedule: Sunday, September 1

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. **IF WANTING TO ADD NAMES TO THE**

BELOW LIST DURING THE WEEK, PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE.

IMMEDIATE Caelin, Christine ☺, Will at Pitt ☺, Mary Ann, Noreen & Kelcey home fire, Ron & Candy 55th Anniversary ☺, Laura, Jess Carwile, Nancy Campitella, Pastor Niki's Daves, Sierra Kane ☺, Aunt Jane, **Grace Simpson family, Jim healing, Linda healing, 17 yr. old Josh, Cathy heart issues.**

CONTINUING The Wayne Madison family (Kenny Shaeffer's uncle), Denny Travis, Uncapher wedding, Lois Trow, Brantley, Sarah Foley and family of Dick Macakanja, Jerry and Jack Travis, Donald Trump and those injured and family of Corey Comperatore, Franco family, family of Maxine Davis, Amy's eye surgery ☺, visitor from Phoenix-Cameron ☺, **Family of Matt Summerhill, Eric Rebar, Todd, Nancy Campitella, General Assembly.**

ONGOING Bob Reed, Donnie Riggle, Gary Harkcom, Donna Fry, Bill & Linda Crabtree, Frank Kovak, Josh Hanus, Shannon Pruss, LaRue Mumaw, 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 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 Joe Biden, 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.



An observation. . . .

This September I will have been with this church for 13 years. During that time, I have been blessed to know some really wonderful people. I'm sure that I've met some earthly angels along with some darn good Christian humans. Sadly, some of them have died, some have moved away, and some are no longer able to attend. Each and every one of them came to this place with a common goal(s), worship our Lord Jesus Christ, fellowship with the congregation, and do the work of the church and community. Many raised their families here and, with all their own uniqueness, worked together following a united path. Many, no matter how far away they have traveled or have moved, continue to support this church. Some continued their support even in death. We receive cards from those who once lived and worshiped here, thanking **all of you** for the work you have put into the church and the community they love. I remember thirteen years ago, as a church leader "aged" out of their position, the next generation would step forward. Now, the volunteers here are quite aware that seventy-something is the new fifty and, with a few exceptions, very soon the church ruling body and ministry team workers will be octogenarians. I guess AUPC is not alone in this people problem. More churches than not are suffering from declining membership. AUPC membership is strong; there is just an age gap between young and older adults. And in general, young people are not beating down the doors of mainstream religions. So what's the answer? What can anyone do? I'm just sharing this (my) observation with you as a way to find the answers for all of the wonderful people here still doing God's work and for the past generations who had the faith to teach, build and give. AUPC has become a home for me, and now that I'm in that "new fifty" stage of my life, it's more important than ever for me to see this church and its people flourish. *Lucky 13!*

Linda

be here

know
Christian
would
recogniz
graduate
any lev
have
connect
AUPC.
Parents,
grandpa
and
please
office
gradinfo
HANK Y