

THE LISTENING POST

MAY 2026



Pastor Niki's Ponderings

Before entering into ordained ministry, I noticed that there were particular seasons of life when it seemed as though EVERYONE around me was getting married. One year, from May to October, I was a bridesmaid in 4 separate weddings and attended 3 others. It was A LOT of fancy shoes and tulle and 1 Corinthians 13 that year.

At the church where I served in my first ordained call, the senior pastor thought it would be great for me to get some experience in officiating weddings. So I wound up being the pastor to do a lot of weddings at our big fancy stone church. And, with the exception of two "scary" brides, I really enjoyed it. Weddings bring a lot of hope and anticipation and joy. There's also some uncertainty there for some people; when it gets tough, will I have the strength to keep with it? Will we work it out, or part ways? "What ifs" abound for many people entering into such a serious and everlasting covenant.

While I do not have 7 weddings on my calendar in this coming May-October time period, I do have 3. This time, I won't be the bridesmaid or the guest...I'll be the officiant. And for two of those weddings, I was pleasantly

surprised that the couple chose a different scripture passage than the "usuals."

They chose Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

"Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other, but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

This passage has been on my mind a great deal lately. One reason is obviously for the weddings that I will be preparing in the coming months. Another is working on a wedding policy with Amy Shupe here at AUPC. It also keeps popping up in conversations about relationships. I recently attended the installation for Rev. Stephanie Backus, a new pastor in our presbytery who is pastoring THREE churches. The scripture is at the top of the covenant agreement between herself, the Communities of Faith (Crete, Shelocta, and Trinity Presbyterian Churches), and the presbytery. The Rev. Gary Lyons shared an illustration of the passage (completely with rope as a visual aid) during his charge to the congregations in worship. I even spent some time considering it over my week of vacation, when I didn't think I needed Geoff's strength, steadiness, and support in holding a platter of ribs coming off the smoker. (see photo below of the aftermath of my poor decision making...a whole rack of ribs wasted due to my inability to accept help.) I've reflected on it as I see the struggles our dear friend Jim will face as he fulfills some of the hardest parts of his marriage vows to his wife, Shannan: "in sickness and in health...in good times and in bad."

Two gets a lot done. Two is good because one can help the other. One can lift up the other. But in lifting up the other, what if the one begins to struggle? What if the one's arms weaken and the other begins to slip from the grasp? Two is good; three is even stronger. Who is your "third?" This is why I love this passage for weddings in particular (though I did have a request for it at a funeral once!)

A cord of three is not easily broken. With the Triune God (Father, Son, Spirit) at the center of that cord of three...the strength of anything else that tries to break it doesn't compare. So when you are considering the strength of relationships in your life, think about that question: Who is your "third?" Who gives you strength when you struggle? Who brings peace to your heart in the midst of fearful times? I pray that the Lord is your third.

And maybe...write a different scripture reference in that wedding or anniversary card this summer. 😊

Pastor Niki <><

Don't let this happen to you.
→



2. Shannon Pruss
4. Shannon Ebner, Kaitlin Thompson
5. Pastor Niki
9. Amy Zukas
14. Lindsay Coulter
15. Richard Miller
16. Kathy Heller
18. Caleb Flickinger, David Truffa
21. Rose Bush, Braden Chetsko, Nancy Joyce
22. Barb Hurley

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.

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:

- May 1 (Fri) Westmoreland County Food Bank – 7:45 AM – St. James Catholic Church Activity Center (behind the Church)
- May 18 (Mon), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (packaging) – 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford, right side, around back
- May 20 (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

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

End of March 2026 Assistance Totals:

1 Family helped with food.

2 Families helped with rent.



It looks like we will finish this school year with 57 kids enrolled in the Food 4 Kids program. We have had additional volunteers helping with packing day and are thrilled with the support we have from our community.

Our next packing day is Wednesday, April 29 at 3:00 p.m. and our last packing day of this school year will be Wednesday, May 20. The last day of school is May 29.



In September, we are hoping to enter into our 10th year of the program with the approval of the Apollo Ridge Administration. Any and all volunteers and/or donations would be greatly appreciated.

Brightest Blessings,
Candy

MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH



**Free Community Program -
Everyone Welcome**

Friday, May 8, 6:30 PM

KIDS KRAFTS

has a spot for YOU!

2nd Friday, Sept -Jun

BRING A FRIEND!



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

**PW Quarterly Meeting -
Saturday, June 13 @ 9:30 AM
Regular Meeting**



\$9.00

FRIDAY, MAY 8 ~ 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM

Sandwiches, Salads, Dessert & Beverage



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 MARCH 2026



March Income: \$11,807.45
March Expenses: \$13,289.48
March Income to Expenses: -\$1,482.03
YTD Income: \$30,605.30
YTD Expenses: \$38,842.89
YTD Income to Expenses: -\$8,237.59

WORSHIP AND MUSIC



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

Communion
Sunday, May 3



A BIG “Thank You!” to all who helped with our very successful and enjoyable **Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, April 18th!** After a minor setback (we had no hot water!!!!) that was resolved before we had to boil water on the stove, everything went smoothly and everybody worked together like a well-oiled machine. A special thanks goes out to John Fouse, who chaired the event. Prior to the dinner, he solicited local businesses for donations, and thanks to their generosity, we had NO COSTS incurred for fundraising expenses! And he also made all the wonderful spaghetti sauce! Thanks to all who worked, all who attended, and all who donated desserts and other necessities for the dinner. We raised over \$1,400 for our General Fund! What a blessing for AUPC!

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



AUPC Acolytes

There will be no schedule for the summer months.



Here's the current practice schedule for the AUPC Handbell Choir:
Wednesdays at 6:00 PM on May 6, 13, 20 (and 27th if necessary) in preparation for our Sunday, May 31 performance. This is a great time to Welcome New Ringers to our Choir! If you're interested in being a part of this music ministry, please see Peggy Landon.



Coming in September
Friday 25th & Saturday 26th
8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Clean, useable items will be accepted through Sunday, Sept. 20.

All items must be taken downstairs and neatly arranged behind the curtain on the stage.

On Wednesdays, during the months of June and August, from 4 to 6 PM, Bill Speer will be at the church and available to assist with large items or help if you are unable to negotiate the stairs. If those dates and times aren't convenient, an appointment may be made. (no assistance will be available in July) All other donations not requiring assistance may be brought to the church Monday thru Thursday, 9:00 AM – 1:30 PM up to the Sept. 20 deadline.

APOLLO UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PRESENTS

“DINNER AND A BAND”

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15
401 1ST ST, APOLLO
DINNER anytime between
5PM & 7PM

Sandwiches, Salads, Chips & Snacks,
Desserts & Beverages
Sold Separately or Save With Our
“FULL-MEAL-DEAL”

THE KISKI VALLEY
COMMUNITY BAND
at 7:00 PM



Free-will Offering for the BAND!
Dinner Proceeds Will Support
AUPC's General Fund.



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.

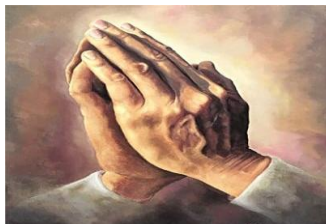
IMMEDIATE *Mary Lou Koesldki, Sean engaged ☺, Aubrey, Zach Bush congrats ☺, Safe travels for Mike & Jerri on Mission Trip, Laura Antonelli & family, Grant & Garrett Gizler recipients of hockey scholarships, Sam Mullooly in National Honor Society, Carol Kopnick, Christine, Holly, Diane Bradshaw family, Chris, Cindy McDermott, Ronan, Butch, Mary Kaufmann, Lydia, Steve ☺, Shelly ☺, Pat, Butch, Viviana's birth Derek & Shelly's new granddaughter, Missy & Buddy traveling mercies, Eric, sympathy to Kathleen Fouse on loss of her son, Jeff, Jeff R.*

CONTINUING *Chris, Jess & family, Ann, Kayley, Laura's nieces, our behind-the-scene church workers, Kelly's 40th!!, Carole Kennedy, Pastor Niki's mom, Joey at Pinewood Derby, Michelle, Loretta ☺, Chris' car accident, Shirley Jackson, Yough students, Anne Cloonan, Scott Hubbard, 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.*

ONGOING

Shannan, 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



The Bible offers numerous verses that celebrate the role of mothers, highlighting their love, strength, and guidance.



1. **Proverbs 31:25:** "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the day to come." This verse emphasizes the resilience and grace of mothers, portraying them as strong figures who face challenges with confidence.
2. **Proverbs 31:26:** "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue." This highlights the wisdom and nurturing nature of mothers, showcasing their role as educators and guides in their children's lives.
3. **Exodus 20:12:** "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land and the Lord your God is giving you." This commandment underscores the importance of respecting and honoring mothers for their sacrifices and contributions.
4. **Isaiah 66:13:** "As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you." This verse draws a parallel between a mother's comforting nature and God's love, illustrating the deep emotional bond and care that mothers provide.
5. **John 16:21:** "A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world." This reflects the profound joy and fulfillment that comes with motherhood, despite the challenges faced.

Mothers are depicted as central figures in the family and community, embodying unconditional love, guidance, and nurturing. They are often the first teachers, instilling values and wisdom in their children. The Bible encourages us to appreciate and honor mothers for their invaluable contributions and sacrifices.

Happy Mother's Day

