

THE LISTENING POST

JANUARY
2025

Pastor Niki's Ponderings



“Aww man! Dang!” I shouted loudly from the shower one recent morning. Geoff hurriedly runs to the door. “What’s the matter? Do you need something?” “Ugh, no. I just got Wham-med*. I made it so far this year!”

In case this exchange makes zero sense to you, allow me to explain. Every December 1 begins the Wham! Game. It’s basically how long you can get in the month of December without hearing the song “Last Christmas (I Gave You My Heart)” by the band Wham! Once you hear it, you declare you got Wham-med. For some people, it happens pretty early on, but others can get lucky and make it at least a week or so before getting Wham-med. This occurred to me in our house on the morning of December

13. It’s the longest I had ever gone in the game. But this was also the longest I’ve ever gone before listening to Christmas music, particularly my own playlist. It is one of my playlists that is rife with reminders of my Dad, like “Santa Claus is Comin’ to Town” by Bruce Springsteen or any Dr. Demento Christmas song (“Christmas at Ground Zero” by Weird Al Yankovic, for example.)

My particular experience with this got me to thinking about the things that sneak up on us, that “wham” us, if you will. Sometimes it’s forgetting to get a gift for the school bus driver and you remember at around 11:30pm the day before school break begins. Or it’s a song that comes on the radio and sparks a memory filled with tears of laughter, or tears of grief. For me this time of year, it’s the realization that annual report writing season is upon us. Happens every year, still whams me every time.

It is currently December 20, 5 days before we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Each year, we gather and reflect upon perhaps the biggest “wham” of all time. Even with prophecies, angelic messengers, and songs about justice and the mighty who will fall, the story of the birth of Jesus manages to wham us, presently and throughout the generations. Each year, it may hit us a little bit differently. Perhaps one year, it comes to you as comfort in the midst of loss. Another year, the birth of Jesus is heard by your ears and brings joy to your heart. And at times, the power of it all just overwhelms you, the knowledge that God is present and active and has got you covered.

By the time you read this, we’ll have started take down trees and wreaths, the trash and recycling will have gone out to the curb, and we’ll be looking at our Star Words on Epiphany. But when you read this, stop to think about how you were whammed by the story of Jesus Christ’s birth this year.

~Pastor Niki



1. Taylor Coulter
2. Becky Kane
3. Kristine Motosicky
4. Bonnie Machak
6. Stephanie Perona,
Bill Speer
9. Karrah Bush, Victor
Valco

10. Nancy Campitella, Darla Tamski
13. Chynna Finoli, Caelin Kaminski, Ted
Kaskan
14. Avery Zukas
15. Blake Painter
16. Nancy Reynolds
19. Luke Kanish
23. Butch Schrecengost
26. Josh Gartley, Joan Orr
27. Holly Austin
28. River Finoli
- 31 Barry Hall, Joyce Wildi

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



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



Sunday School is back! Two classes will be available, upstairs, each Sunday during worship. The nursery is available to parents, if needed, and the Prayground will be open for little ones or those needing a break from the pew. *Volunteers with appropriate clearances will be welcome to assist our teachers.*

Sunday School is back! Two classes will be available, upstairs, each Sunday during worship. The nursery is available to parents, if



***We're Back . . .
If you want to ring, call the church office!***



YOUTH GROUP
Calling all kids Middle school through 17 years old are welcome to participate in monthly meetings,

coming soon, filled with conversation, Bible reading and fun activities in and out of the church. We also participate in various service projects. For more information, contact the church office.

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:

- Jan. 3 (Fri) Westmoreland County Food Bank – 7:45 AM – St. James Catholic Church Activity Center (behind the Church)
- Jan. 13 (Mon), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (packaging) – 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford, right side, around back
- Jan. 15 (Wed), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (distribution) volunteers at 7:30 – 8:00 AM - public at 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford (see above)



Food 4 Kids
A Community Sponsored Program

Thanks to TJ Lucas for filling in more and more. Thanks also for all the volunteers who have stepped up to help in Ron's areas. Now more than ever, we are filling the gap. Thank you for your continued support for the many children we help.

Candy



We're hoping you'll help decorate our special tree. Again this year, AUPC will be giving the gift of warmth to Apollo-Ridge

students.

Mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves will help warm not only the body but the hearts of many. **Donations will be taken to the Apollo-Ridge school nurse on January 11.** We hope to be sharing the warmth with boys and girls of all ages and sizes. Your gifts will be warmly appreciated ☺. Thanks!

Get your tissue paper ready and wrap up some boys and girls under ware, socks, T-shirts, sweatpants etc. Anything that the school nurse at Apollo Elementary School would need to make a little one's day a little easier after a romp in the rain, or a slide in the mud, or a bathroom or illness emergency. These items, when appropriate, would allow a child to continue his/her school day or

travel home clean and dry. **White gifts may be placed in the vestibule and will be collected through Epiphany Sun.**



Through the first week of February we'll be collecting cans of soup that will be donated to the Apollo Area Food Bank and to our own Emergency Food Pantry. We're looking for many "caring hands" to carry in "cans of caring."

MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH



Friday, January 10th
6:30 PM
KIDS KRAFTS
HAS RETURNED!
2ND Friday, Sept - Jun

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

**PW Quarterly Meeting –
Saturday, March 8 @ 9 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



Schedule: Sunday, January 5

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

CHANGES for Newsletter delivery in 2025.

In order to continue moving forward with responsible fiscal policies, some things must change. We are moving toward **not** continuing with bulk mailings as there is both a permit and monthly mailing cost. New options to receive 2025 newsletters are via your private email, our church website, picking up a copy in the vestibule, or having a single copy mailed to your home if you don't have an email or computer. ***If you wish to receive *The Listening Post* by email, please email the church at office@aupc.comcastbiz.net and include your name and email address. *If you'd like to read the newsletter on line at www.apollopresby.org or pick up a copy at the church, you won't need to do anything. *If you wish to have a copy mailed to you, please call or email the church office with your name and current address.**

Beginning in **January 2025**, there will be no bulk mailing of *The Listening Post*. In order to continue to receive this publication, please choose from the selections above.

Thank You ~ Stewardship and Finance

WORSHIP AND MUSIC



SUNDAYS 11:00 AM

Join us in person or
livestream on YouTube.

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 *Ron's surgery, LaRue Mumaw family, Jordan, Caitlyn, Joe Mazur, Joyce M. traveling mercies, Wesson, 3 yr old Nora, Tim Kanish, Joy: Concordia Faith Friends doing well ☺, Pastor Niki's step-dad Dave, Connie Kepple, Bev Blystone, Families of house fires, Betty Bateman, Katie.*

CONTINUING *Jennie Baustert family, Steve Pavetti family, Adam Greece family, traveling mercies for Melissa & family .Ann Cloonan, Nancy, Missy "Hurley", LaRue Mumaw, Jerry Travis family, Carwile's nephew Liam, Jordan, Ron George. Veterans, John ☺.*

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.



