

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.



We'll be taking a summer hiatus. See you in September and, in the meantime, we have a NEW playground right in the

sanctuary for little ones to enjoy.



YOUTH GROUP

We have a couple more activities planned for this year's end. We encourage our current members to bring some friends next year. It's only right to share the fun!

Youth Group Fundraiser!

Enjoy making your own Sundae on Sunday, July 14 following worship. Proceeds will benefit Youth programs and activities.

Sunday school kids will be having a "Lemonade Stand" fundraiser after worship on Sunday, Aug. 4 to help with Sunday school program expenses. Cookies will also be for sale!



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:
 - July 5, Aug. 2 (Fri) Westmoreland County Food Bank – 7:45 AM – St. James Catholic Church Activity Center (behind the Church)

- July 15, Aug. 19 (Mon), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (packaging) – 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford, right side, around back
- July 17, Aug. 21 (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



Food 4 Kids
A Community Sponsored Program

We have completed our 6th year for Food 4 Kids and are hoping that we can continue with our 7th year in September.

As you know, we have reached out to find someone to take over the Food 4 Kids program. I am happy to tell you that Pastor TJ Lucas has agreed to take on this much needed responsibility. TJ was instrumental in putting together this program from the very start. She is pastor for Trinity Reformed Church of Christ in Scottsdale and also the chaplain at Quality Life Services in Washington Township. She lives in Vandergrift and has two young girls. Ron and I are not dropping out just yet, but will be helping TJ along the way as long as we are able--along with our faithful volunteers. A big 'Thank You' to all of you who have supported this program in so many ways!

Brightest Blessings, Candy and Ron



CLEAN ~ UP 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.



July's Items: 1 pair work gloves: cotton with leather palm or all leather. 1 16-34 oz. bottle of disinfectant dish soap

August Items: 7 sponges, including 1 large. 1 12-40 oz. liquid concentrate household cleaner to be mixed with water (no spray bottles)

MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH



Sunday, Sept. 8, 10am

@ Owen's Grove.

BSPC will join us for this covered dish picnic. Drinks, hot dogs, buns, paper products &



condiments will be provided.

KIDS KRAFTS SEE YOU IN THE FALL!

All kids welcome, so bring some friends!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

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

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



**PW Annual Fall
Sandwich & Salad Bar
Friday, September 13
11 AM – 1:30 PM
More details later!**

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

WHERE WE STAND at the END of MAY 2024

May Income: \$7,935.01
May Expenses: \$9,375.81
May Income to Expenses: \$-1,460.80

YTD Income: \$53,023.31
YTD Expenses: \$61,060.89

YTD Income to Expenses: -\$8,037.58



WORSHIP AND MUSIC



SUNDAYS 11:00 AM

Join us in person or live on YouTube.



Schedule: Sunday, July 7 & Sunday, August 4



Attention All Acolytes: If you have an interest in being an acolyte throughout this church season, please see Miss Shelly.



A Rally Day Celebration will be held on Sunday, August 25 following worship for Sunday School children and their families. This event will begin immediately following worship and will finish up at approximately 3:00 PM.

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 *Karen & Denny 56 years, Chris George, Candy George, Carey Pfizer & Victoria Jones family, John Reed, Jane Cessna, Butch Schrecengost,*

Christine, Linda, Peggy Landon says Thank you , 2 yr.old Nora, Patty Pavetti's sister and Allen, Eric, Carolyn R, Family of Jim Talmadge, Family of Cathy Van der Wheel, Karen's family, Bill Mumaw family, Virginia Madison, Don Aber family, Scott and Nancy Hubbard, Apollo's Graduation ☺, Carole Kennedy test results and traveling mercies, Richard Shaeffer, **Jacob & Kloey's wedding, Grads in Pastor Niki's family, family of Darrell Kennedy.**

CONTINUING Patty Pavetti great-aunt again, Eric, Sierra Kane graduating Magna Cum Laude ☺, Barry & Glenna 56 years!, Mat Hilty Defensive Player of the Year! ☺, Family of Anna Kanish, Michael Ost family, Chris and Cassie traveling mercies, Kelcey and kids ☺, Hall's neighbor adoption ☺, Thanks from Niki for birthday celebration, **Sam.**

ONGOING Donnie Riggle, Gary Harkcom, Donna Fry, Matt Summerhill, 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.



Sign up for the Compassion Team!

A "Compassion Team" has been formed for our congregation. This group will coordinate meals for those who are ill, hospitalized, grieving, or have had a new baby. There will be a sign-up sheet in the church vestibule for those interested in helping or being the contact person for this effort. Or, if you can't get in to sign-up, simply give the office a call.

Thanks for your compassion!

LOOKING AHEAD:

June 30 Church Kickball Game
July 7 Joint Worship Service with BSPC

July 8 – 11 Community Bible School at BSPC
August 11 Community Worship Service at NBUMC
August 25 RALLY DAY
September 8 Annual Church picnic at Owen's Grove

be here

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Christian
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AUPC.
Parents,
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and
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office
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HANK Y