

THE LISTENING POST

JULY ~ AUGUST 2025

Pastor Niki's Ponderings



Hi there!
It's
Pastor
Niki,
coming
to you on
behalf of
our
children's
ministry
Sunday
school
program
at



AUPC. I wanted to share some great new things coming, including some big changes, and ways you can be involved in the lives of our awesome children in our church family.

In early June, while our children celebrated another really fun year together learning about our faith in God, I was able to gather with some of our parents and caregivers upstairs in our “formerly” yellow, classroom/conference room to talk about the

future of our Sunday school classes. We have had two incredible teachers primarily running things over the last few years. They love our children. They work so hard to do the very best they can for them. But as we all know, it is hard to pour from an empty cup. Our teachers were almost never in worship with the rest of their church family. Sometimes it was a struggle to get volunteers for a number of reasons. Two adults are necessary for each classroom of children according to our safety policy, which meant a lot of shuffling week to week. And so we had some decisions to make together for the health of our teachers, our kids, and our caregivers. It was a meeting filled with great conversation, encouragement, and excitement about what we look to do next. Here is that in a nutshell:

1. Sunday School for our children will now be 10:00am-10:45am, before our 11:00am worship service. This allows for us all to worship together as a church family and easier availability for our volunteers and teachers.
2. Sunday School classes for children will now operate on a rotation model. What does that mean? It means it will follow a model that works better for our church population. You sign up to teach or assist for only 3 weeks at a time! Sunday School goes from the week after Labor Day to the week before Memorial Day weekend. Here's how it will go:
 - a. Week 1- All children are together to hear and learn the Bible story for the rotation. (Two adults are needed for this one group; one can teach and one can

assist, or both can teach.
That's up to them!)

- b. Week 2- Children are split into two groups according to grades. Each group will attend Sunday school with two adults leading each class. Group A will learn about the Bible story heard during Week 1 from their teachers using one method, while Group B will learn about the Bible story heard during Week 1 from their teachers using another method. These methods can be: craft, music, art, cooking, stories, drama, video, games, etc. Teachers are encouraged to choose the one that fits their gifts. Lesson plans and supplies are provided too!
 - c. Week 3 – Group A and Group B will now switch to the other teacher/method from the week prior. They will again hear the story from Week 1.
3. The conference room will now become a lovely hangout spot from 10:00am-10:45am. If you're not volunteering in Sunday School that week, feel free to grab some coffee or tea via the Keurig, hang out in the space, read a book, chat with others, etc.

"Pastor Niki, this is great information. But I don't have any kids in the church, so I'm not really needed for teaching them." Wrong. 🙄 (I bet you knew that was coming!) Here's merely a few reasons why our kids need

YOU (no matter your age, no matter your parent status.)

1. We just had a baptism in worship a couple of weeks ago. If you will recall, we are asked a vital question as members of a church family. "Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to continue to guide and nurture this child, by what you say and what you do, with love and prayer, encouraging them to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful part of their church family?" That is a question for ALL of us, no matter our age, if we have children or not, if our children are grown or not, if we have one child in our church or thirty. We are all called to guide and nurture those who come along our path.
2. Admittedly, we are not all gifted to teach children in a classroom, and that is okay. But you would be amazed to work with children in a setting like this. They are so eager to learn, to hear about God's love for them, how God has called different people to be a part of this world, and how they can live out God's commands to us, God's people.
3. Not only can our children learn from you, but YOU have plenty to learn from them! And no, not just how to operate a cell phone camera or what a "skibidi toilet" is (you don't want to know.) They're great at teaching us about God's great love for all creatures, the joy we find in Christ in their laughter, and lessons in humility when the "dad jokes" fall flat.

4. Scripture is FILLED with passages telling us the importance of sharing our faith and stories with children. Read Proverbs 4, Deuteronomy 6, Exodus 12, Psalm 78, and Proverbs 22. And that's just a start.
5. When the grown ups in your life get you down, when the world feels oppressive with all the bad news, I have found that all of the children in our church family have their own beautiful ways to find joy around them. And they're more than happy to share those ways with us.

When I first encountered AUPC and looked at its Facebook page, I could not believe the number of children that were here. This is not a common thing. As a pastor, my first question was "what are they DOING?!" As a parent, it became clear quickly. I watched as our daughter latched onto one or two individuals who made her feel comfortable, safe, and loved. As those relationships grew, it made it easier for her to be who God has made her to be, in all of her wonder and silliness. She has been able to grow here as a child of God because of the children AND the adults who help to shape her. And as I sat in that meeting in early June, I heard other parents and caregivers say the same about their own kids. As your pastor (and yes, as a mom), I pray that you would go before God in prayer to see if and how God might be calling you to be a part of the children's ministry here at AUPC. I'd love to sit and chat with you about what it involves, what it could look like for you, and how our children can help you see God in the world.

AUPC's office will be closed on Fridays through Labor Day weekend. Summer office hours for the public will be Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

4. Emily McManus, John Goughenour, Jacob Hilty, Gavin Motosicky
5. Debbie Rupert
7. Sue Arnoldy, Emma Knox
8. Linda Slicker
9. Amanda Blaschka, Pat Sharrar
12. Lisa Bittner
13. Diane Detman, Amanda Flickinger, Joel Varga
15. Matthew Hilty
16. Brenda Kaskan
17. Lydia Summerhill
19. Alex Dunmire
20. Larry Valco



7. Max Snedecor
12. Dennis Travis, Laura Uncapher
15. Brandee Bush, Doris Patterson
19. Walt Smail, Valerie Thompson
22. Debbie Heffernan, Kelcy Jackson
23. Richard Painter
27. Marcie Painter
28. Melinda Miller
30. Rob Kane
31. Jeff Bush

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Nursery is available to parents. Young children may attend 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.

Please feel free to take advantage of these spaces while Sunday School is dismissed for the Summer.

get to offer this wonderful week of fun for no cost to those kids who come to meet Jesus and make new friends! Share that love with others!



Looking for a way to help with our Apollo Community VBS this year? We've got some great ways to be a part of it, even if you can't be there that week.

1. Please consider donating any of the following items: small bottled waters, Capri Sun juice bags, applesauce packets
2. Our theme is "Holy Holidays!" If you have any fun yard decorations, bunting, easy set up trees, etc. that you are okay with loaning for our decor, please get in touch with Pastor Niki to set up a drop off time. Please also LABEL your decorations with name and phone number (light brown masking tape or painters tape works well for this.)
3. Share about VBS with others in the community. We are so thankful that we

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:

- Aug. 1 (Fri) Westmoreland County Food Bank – 7:45 AM – St. James Catholic Church Activity Center (behind the Church)
- Jul 14 & Aug 18 (Mon), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (packaging) – 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford, right side, around back
- Jul 16 & Aug 20 (Wed), Apollo-Ridge Food Bank (distribution) volunteers at 7:30 – 8:00 AM - public at 8:00 AM – Glenn Bush Ford (see above)

ATTENTION: COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL: APPLY AT FOOD BANKS, MEALS ON WHEELS, FOOD 4 KIDS, HABITAT FOR HUMANITY *You get the idea!*
COMMUNITY COMPASSION

AUPC Emergency Fund

May: Food – 1 Family, 3 bags food
Financial – 3 Families, \$413 Rent. \$1,000 gift certificates.

Another successful school year has ended and we look forward to providing A-R kids with backpack, weekend nourishment in '25-'26. Reminders for packing days will be on the monthly calendars which can be found on our website www.apollopresby.org **THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS!!**

MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH

Get ready for some parade and fireworks fun! Join our church family and our partners in ministry at AUPC to march in the July 5 Apollo Independence Day weekend parade. Wear your red, white, and blue, decorate your “little red wagon” or bicycles, and let’s share some community joy! Parade begins at 1pm on Saturday, July 5, in downtown Apollo; line up is by 12pm. Fireworks are at dusk on Sunday, July 6, in downtown Apollo. (Stay tuned for further details!)



**On Sunday,
July 27th at
6:00 PM, the Apollo United
Presbyterian
Church is happy to present
THE KISKI VALLEY COMMUNITY BAND
This group of musicians range in age
from 14 to 80+ and meet each Tuesday
to practice the one thing they all love . .
. . playing music. Their concerts are
“free-will offering”.**

During the performance there will be food items for sale. Hot dogs, snacks, baked goods, & beverages will be available. Come for dinner and entertainment! Everyone Welcome! Bring a friend!
(Food item proceeds will support AUPC General Fund)



**Free Community Program -
Everyone Welcome
Friday, Sept. 12,
6:30 PM
KIDS KRAFTS
has a spot for YOU!
2ND Friday, Sept -June
See you in the fall!**

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

**PW Quarterly Meeting –
Saturday, September 13 @ 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

2025 PW CALENDAR of EVENTS

Friday, September 12 ~ Fall Salad Bar
 Saturday, September 13 ~ Quarterly Mtg. 9 am
 November 21 & 22 ~ Christmas Tea
 Saturday, December 13 ~ Quarterly Mtg. 9 am

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

WHERE WE STAND at the END of MAY 2025

May Income: \$7,376.20
 May Expenses: \$9,510.25
 May Income to Expenses: -\$2,134.05

YTD Income: \$50,710.17
 YTD Expenses: \$66,069.07
 YTD Income to Expenses: -\$15,358.90

**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

WORSHIP AND MUSIC



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



Church in the Pavilion

SUNDAY, JULY 6
 10am- Pavilion at BSPC (pending weather)

Come worship together with our siblings in Jesus Christ from Apollo United Presbyterian Church and Boiling Springs Presbyterian Church!
 We'll have worship w/communion outdoors, followed by lunch together. Please bring a dish to pass and a chair for your bottom (if you prefer)!
 A-L: desserts
 M-Z: sides

Signups available at your respective church.

This is RAIN or SHINE!
 (We'll be in the church building if it rains.)

Stay and help decorate for VBS too!

COME AS YOU ARE
 BIBLE STUDY
Pavilion Edition

Every Wednesday in August at 7pm
 Any and all are welcome to attend

Boiling Springs Presbyterian Church
 1668 PA-56
 Spring Church, PA

*in case of inclement weather, we will meet in the church dining room

WELCOME BACK DAVID McFARLAND,
 Guest Lay Pastor, sharing the Word with us on Sunday, August 3, 11 AM

Perhaps some of you will recognize Dave from the candid photo (above) taken during one of his last visits.

APOLLO AREA CHURCHES WILL HOLD A COMMUNITY WORSHIP SERVICE AT NEW BEGINNINGS METHODIST CHURCH, SUNDAY, AUGUST 10 AT 10:30 AM.

SIGNUPS FOR THE COVERED DISH DINNER FOLLOWING WORSHIP WILL BE FORTHCOMING

Worship and

At the GROVE

On Sunday, September 7 at 10:00 AM, at Owens Grove, AUPC and BSPC will have a joint worship service followed by a picnic luncheon. AUPC will provide hot dogs, buns, condiments, paper products and drinks. Those attending will be asked to provide:

Names A-L: side dishes

Names M-Z: desserts

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 Family of Bob Reed, Anniversaries: 57th Denny & Karen Travis, 55th Butch & Donna Schrecengost, Carole Kennedy 😊, coach with cancer, Israel & Iran, Missy, Kenny Bash, Howard, Thank you all from Joyce Mollick, Thanks Joyce W for new banner, Kathy's brother Tom, Family of Martha Jane Wilkinson, Congratulation Graduates, Jess Carwile, Antonelli adult children, Jean, **Grace Assembly of God supporting F4K, Eric employment, Mrs. Riley, Shane, Thanks from Shelly, Geoff sang National Anthem at Thunderbirds game 😊.**

CONTINUING Lani Knox, Mollick family, 12 year old drowning victim, Caelin & Alex 😊 😊, Dillon 😊, Prayer Sister Luncheon, Judy, Nora, Traveling mercies for Ben Smoyer, Joyce, Mike & Jerri Mollick, Carole Kennedy, Vacationers, Visitors & families separated, ,Chloe, Gary Harkcom, Barb Hurley & Missy, Peggy's sister, Butch's surgery April 22, Dale Piffer family, **Todd, Dave, Pat Jackson, Curt, Denny, Pat's friend is grandfather, SE Asia earthquake victims, Christine's knee replacement.**

ONGOING Missy, Katie, Donnie Riggie, 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

