



“Leading in/through Transition—Opportunity to Prepare”

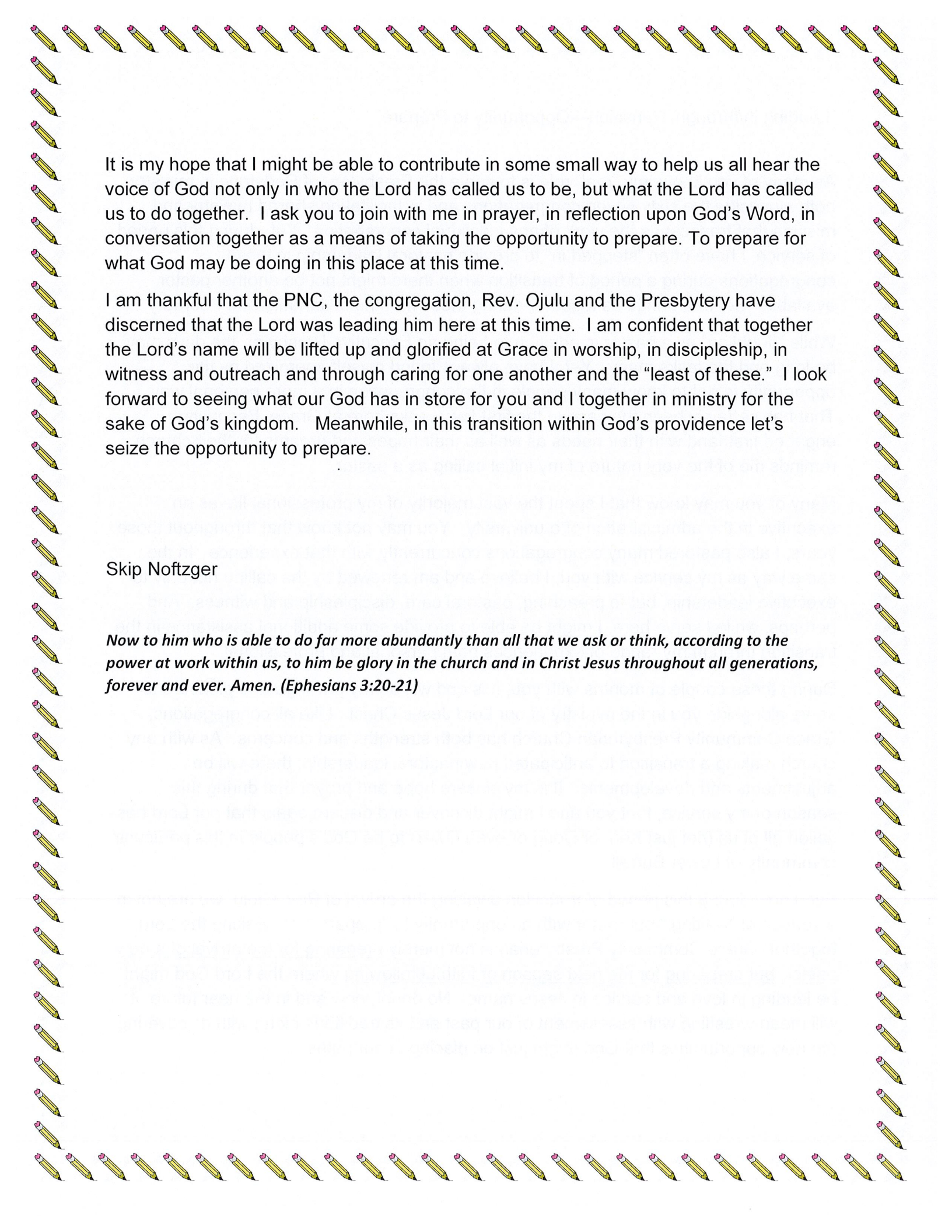
As many of you know, my “real” role is to serve the Presbytery of Redstone in ministry both alongside the sixty-seven congregations and in facilitating shared ministry and mission that transcends the work of any individual congregation. Yet, during this period of service, I have often “stepped in” to provide pastoral leadership in these congregations during a period of transition when there might not be another pastor available. So, that brings us together during these months of January and February.

While “doubling” as a pastor in addition to being an Executive Presbyter, the days may be long and the tasks many. Yet, I have always found myself energized by the opportunity to get to know many people in the congregation in a more personal way. That has certainly been the case in the first few weeks here at Grace. Becoming engaged firsthand with their needs as well as their hopes and dreams for their church reminds me of the very nature of my initial calling as a pastor.

Many of you may know that I spent the vast majority of my professional life as an executive in the administration of a university. You may not know that throughout those years, I also pastored many congregations concurrently with that experience. In the same way as my service with you, I believe and am renewed by the calling not only to executive leadership, but to preaching, pastoral care, discipleship and witness. And perhaps, while I serve here, I might be able to provide some additional assistance in the transition through my range of experiences both personal and professional.

During these couple of months with you, it is and will be my privilege and pleasure to serve alongside you in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like all congregations, Grace Community Presbyterian Church has both strengths and concerns. As with any church making a transition to anticipated new pastoral leadership, there will be adjustments and developments. It is my sincere hope and prayer that during this season of my service, that you and I might discover and discern again that our Lord has called all of us (not just Ken, or Doug or even Owar) to be God’s people in this particular community of Lower Burrell.

Even now during this period of transition awaiting the arrival of Rev. Ojulu, we are not in a season of “waiting,” but rather with an opportunity to “prepare.” In seeking the Lord together, Grace Community Presbyterian is not merely preparing for the arrival of a new pastor, but preparing for the next season of faithful following where the Lord God might be leading in love and service in Jesus name. No doubt, now and in the near future, it will mean wrestling with assessment of our past and its traditions along with discovering the new opportunities that God might just be placing in our paths.



It is my hope that I might be able to contribute in some small way to help us all hear the voice of God not only in who the Lord has called us to be, but what the Lord has called us to do together. I ask you to join with me in prayer, in reflection upon God's Word, in conversation together as a means of taking the opportunity to prepare. To prepare for what God may be doing in this place at this time.

I am thankful that the PNC, the congregation, Rev. Ojulu and the Presbytery have discerned that the Lord was leading him here at this time. I am confident that together the Lord's name will be lifted up and glorified at Grace in worship, in discipleship, in witness and outreach and through caring for one another and the "least of these." I look forward to seeing what our God has in store for you and I together in ministry for the sake of God's kingdom. Meanwhile, in this transition within God's providence let's seize the opportunity to prepare.

Skip Noftzger

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)



Glenn Nordmark submitted the following book report(s):

The Wish
Nicholas Sparks

In the last stage of her fight with cancer, Maggie Dawes tells her life story to a helper in the store where her photographs are sold. At the age of sixteen she was sent from Seattle to live with her aunt in a hamlet on a North Carolina island because she was pregnant. She refuses the aunt's suggestion of a tutor until she sees him – an eighteen-year-old hunk. Gradually they fall in love, and he asks her to marry him. The problem of her returning to Seattle after the birth and his going to West Point seem to be to be obstacles too large. Sparks presents several interesting twists.



We have many DVDs in the library which were donated by Christian Education. Subjects include Biblical figures, scripture, and Christian comedians plus films that contain inspirational messages. Here are some of the titles:

 Luther

 The Last Supper

 Gospel of John

 Parables of Jesus

 Fireproof

 Journey into the Unknown - The Inspiring Story of Hanneke van Dam

 Reflections on Psalm 23 For People with Cancer

There are more DVDs that will be cataloged and placed in the library in the near future.



We would like to thank those that hosted coffee fellowship and to our greeters for the month of January. Cheryl Landis, the Pastor Nominating Committee and the Fellowship and Nurture Committee. Again, thank you so much for volunteering each Sunday.

9:40am Sunday Greeters Needed



Church greeters are very essential for our church. A greeter spreads hospitality throughout our church as part of an effective first impression. Please consider volunteering to be a 9:40am Sunday Greeter. Contact the office at 724-339-9661 if interested.

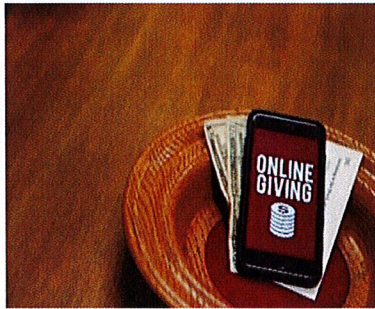
Join the GCPC Chancel Choir



- ♪ Open to members and friends of Grace
- ♪ Join with people who want to praise God thru music
- ♪ Wednesdays at 7:00pm

If you are interested, please call 724-339-9661 or email secretary@gracecommunitypresbyterian.org

Did you know you can give Grace Church via your online banking account? Follow the following set-up instructions for most banks. Consult your bank if it is different than below.



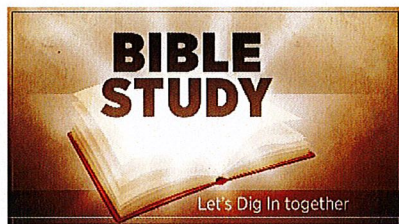
- *Go to your online banking tab
- *Pay Bills
- *Add a Company or Person
- *Type "Grace Community Presbyterian Church" as the Company or Person Name
- *Enter Address: 2751 Grant Street, Lower Burrell, PA 15068
- *Enter Phone Number 724-339-9661
- *Save

You are now ready to enter your contribution amount and the date to send it to the church just like if paying your electric or gas bill online.



February 02	James Drane
February 11	Debbie Roskey
February 14	Marcia Sackett
February 18	Liam Matara
February 25	Jodi Johnson

Come join us for Bible Study



Who: Everyone
When: Every Tuesday @ 1PM
Why: Join in an in-depth study of Acts and the beginning of the Christian Church



REMINDER - 2023 Contribution Report and 2024 Offering Envelopes

Please pick up your 2023 contribution report and/or 2024 offering envelopes located in the Narthex.



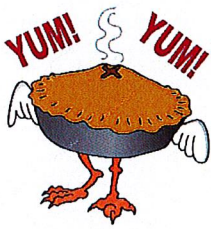
We plan to print an updated membership directory in February. If you have made any changes to your home and/or email address, phone number, etc. please contact the office at 724-339-9661 or send us an email to secretary@gracecommunitypresbyterian.org with your changes.



Hope you can join us for our annual Chicken Pie Dinner on Sunday, February 18 @ 5:00pm in Cana Hall. See attached flyer.

Skip Noftzger, the Executive Presbyter / Stated Clerk of Redstone Presbytery, will be the Bridge Pastor at Grace Church, providing pastoral care and leadership during January and February, in anticipation of Pastor Owar Ojulu beginning his ministry at Grace Church, on March 1, 2024. Skip plans to be in the office Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings.

Contact Information for Skip Noftzger: 724-833-0340 or executive@redstonepresbytery.org



**COME AND JOIN
THE FUN
AT THE ANNUAL
Chicken Pie Dinner
Sunday, February 18, 2024
5:00 PM in Cana Hall**

**The Fellowship & Nurture Committee will provide
mashed potatoes and beverages.**

**Please bring a covered dish to serve
10-12 people.**

Table Service will be provided.

**Use the tear off box to indicate your attendance or
contact the Church office @ 724-339-9661 or
secretary@gracecommunitypresbyterian.org**

Name _____

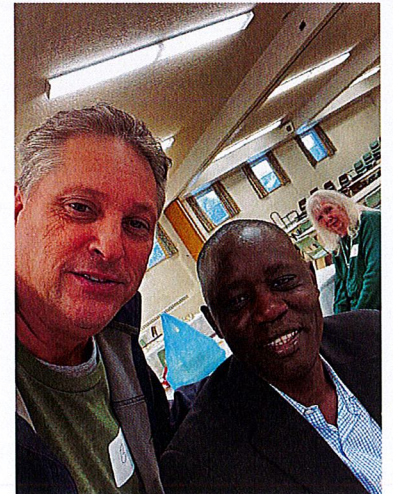
No. Attending _____

Chicken Pie _____

Salad _____

Dessert _____

The Pastor Nominating Committee presented the Rev Dr Owar Ojulu and his family as a candidate to become the new pastor for Grace Church on Saturday January 6, 2024. The committee has worked prayerful to discern where God is leading us and the person who should be our Pastor. Congregation voting will be Sunday January 7. Despite the snow, the “meet and greet” was a success.



Sunday, January 7, the Grace Community Church congregation chose Rev Dr Owar Ojulu as our new pastor and he accepted the call. We believe in Grace and Gods call that we take this journey together. A reception for Pastor Owar and his family was held immediately after our service.



FEBRUARY GRACE HIGHLIGHTS

Updates from Session

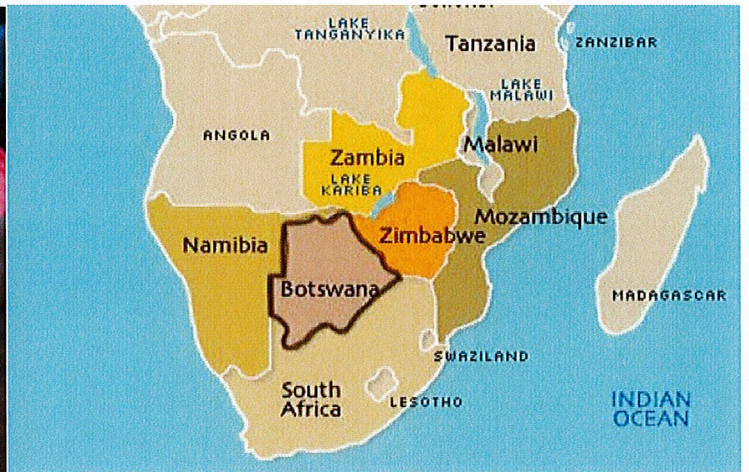
- ✠ Session accepted the resignation of Elder Paul Berggren from Session. Moving away but wants to remain on the rolls.
- ✠ Communion was served to 105 congregants on January 7.
- ✠ Elders Michael Cochenour and Cathy Brady will attend the Presbytery meeting on January 27th to report to Presbytery on the vote to call Rev. Owar Ojulu as the next pastor of Grace community. The vote was 71 yes 3 no.
- ✠ The session received the statistical report on Grace Community for 2023 that shows we have a membership of 267.
- ✠ Rev. Paul Milz will lead Grace in worship and communion on February 7. Rev. Dean Byrom will fill the pulpit on February 11th.
- ✠ Dates to remember, Lent starts Feb. 14th, Palm Sunday March 24, Maundy Thursday March 28, Easter Sunday March 31
- ✠ Grace Church had an Industrial Appraisal of the building and contents. Grace Church was valued at 8.3 million dollars. The insurance company will be advised of the current appraisal.
- ✠ Reach-Out will be having our annual Chicken Pie dinner on February 18
- ✠ Stewardship and Finance report that there was an increase in regular giving and bequests that made the year end budget show a 7% surplus for 2023. Session thanks all who increased their pledges or gave to support Grace Community Presbyterian Church in doing God' work.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Our 2023 shoeboxes went to **Botswana!**

Botswana is a land-locked country, about the size of France, located to the north of South Africa and is home to 2.3 million people. About 70% of its territory is the Kalahari desert with the rest being river plains. Formerly called Bechuanaland, Botswana gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1964 and has main industries of mining (diamond, copper, nickel) and tourism. Botswana has a democratic government and over the past fifty years has developed one of the higher per-capita incomes among sub-Saharan Africa. Tswana is the major ethnic group and Setswana is the major language; about 79% of the Botswana people are Christians. Below is a picture of children in Botswana receiving shoebox gifts in 2022. Thank you for showing God's love to these children!



As we kick off Operation Christmas Child in 2024, we will be collecting items year-round to try to fill as many shoeboxes as possible. We have not reached 500 yet, and that would be a great goal. Please consider collecting items year-round, especially as you see sales throughout the year. The monthly item for February is girl's fashion accessories and hairbrushes. Thank you for your support of this ministry!

Monthly Shoebox Items

February	Girl's fashion accessories, hairbrushes
March	Soap & Washcloths/ Toothbrushes
April	Games/puzzles Stuffed Animals (we have plenty of stuffed animals!*)
May	Arts & Craft Supplies (colored pencils, crayons, watercolors, drawing paper, sidewalk chalk)
June	Coloring/Activity Books
July	WOW toys (soccer or playground ball, dolls, large trucks, etc.)
August	School Supplies (pens, pencils, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, markers)
September	Clothing / Flip-flops
October	Small toys (Matchbox cars, sewing kits, jump rope, small balls)
November	WOW toys

*In late December, PetSmart came through and provided over 400 stuffed animals from two different locations!

February

2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:00pm CS Den Mtg 6:30pm Ladies Club	2  OFFICE CLOSED	3
4 9:00-am SS 10am Worship/Communion CS Church Service 6pm Youth Group	5	6 1:00pm Bible Study	7 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	8 CE Meeting 3:00pm CS Pinewood Derby Practice	9 OFFICE CLOSED	10 9:30am Pinewood Derby
11  9:00-am SS 9am F&N Mtg. 10am Worship 6pm Youth Group	12 6:30pm Mission Mtg.	13 1:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm Men's Club	14  7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	15 6:00pm CS Den Mtg 6:30pm Ladies Club	16 OFFICE CLOSED	17
18 9:00-am SS 10am Worship 11am Deacons Mtg 6pm Youth Group 5pm Chicken Pie Dinner	19 	20 1:00pm Bible Study	21 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	22 6:00pm CS Den Mtg	23 OFFICE CLOSED	24
25 9:00-am SS 10am Worship 6pm Youth Group	26 6:30pm Session Meeting	27 1:00pm Bible Study	28 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	29 6:00pm CS Den Mtg		

Coffee Fellowship (Host(s):

February 4 Reitha Bieranoski/Dan & Teresa Howard
 February 11 Volunteer(s) Needed
 February 18 Stephanie Tutka
 February 25 Volunteer(s) Needed

February Greeter(s)

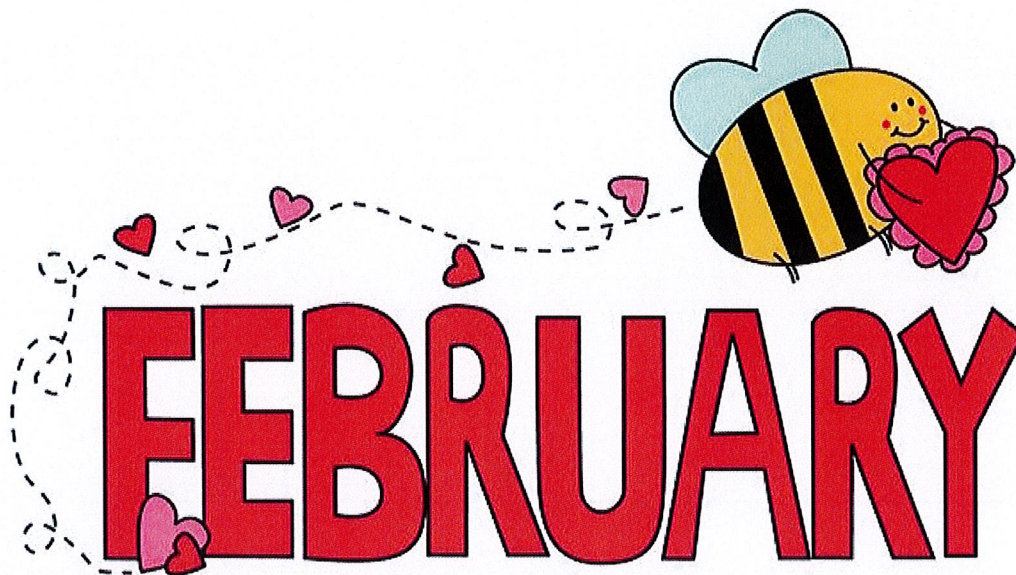
Linda Johnson
 Volunteer(s) Needed
 Volunteer(s) Needed
 Volunteer(s) Needed

CALENDAR SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Grace Community Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
2751 Grant Street
Lower Burrell, PA 15068

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
New Kensington, PA 15068
PERMIT NO. 221



CROSS CURRENTS

