



First Presbyterian Church of Harborcreek

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November Newsletter Volume 2024, Issue 10

Church Leadership

Pastor.....Rev. Mike Wilson
Music Director.....Chris Thomas
Organist.....Joyce Kriner
Secretary.....Mary Stewart
Custodian & Librarian.....Eileen Kriner

Committee Chairs—2023

Co-Clerks of Session.....Gil and Marlene Long
Membership Care &
Development.....Brian Griffith
Mission/Outreach.....Ann Nesgoda
Nominating & Training.....Don Duckett
Personnel.....Sue Kellerman
Property.....Bob Kellerman
Spiritual Formation.....Jennifer Wedzik
Stewardship & Finance.....Bob Kellerman
Worship.....Scott Shunk
Recording Secretary.....Cindy Skladanowski
Treasurer.....Barbara Griffith

Deacons

Chairperson.....Bill Nesgoda
Vice-Chair.....Nancy Way
Secretary.....Nancy Way
Treasurer.....Peggie Smith
Caring Tree.....Nancy Way
and Bill Nesgoda
Correspondence.....Linda DeAngelo
Flower Coordinator.....Sally Wakeley
Funeral Dinners.....Sue Beighley
and Deacon of the Month
Greeters/Liturgists.....Deacon of the Month
Prayer Chain.....Pat Feddersen
and Nancy McNally



First Presbyterian Church of
Harborcreek



STEAK Fall Swiss DINNER

Saturday, November 2, 2024

4:30—6:30 p.m.

Adults \$14.00

Same great meal, but take out style.

Drive Thru Take Out Only

***Enter thru west entrance
to the parking lot
and you will be directed
where to proceed.***



A decorative banner with a sunset background and the text "Message from the Pastor" in a cursive font.

Dear Siblings in Christ,

I've been asked, here and there, about things that Presbyterians believe and do. So, I thought I'd write a series of newsletter articles explaining some of what makes us distinctive, theologically and in our practices and governance. This month I'm writing about Reformed Theology, the broad tradition that guides our denominational beliefs and practices. And I'll note that when I write here and elsewhere about what "we" believe and do, I'm not saying every church member must subscribe to everything I describe. We pastors are rigorously schooled in Reformed Theology and Presbyterian polity and worship. In fact, we must pass difficult ordination exams in each of those three areas plus one on Biblical exegesis (more on that in another article). Clergy are held accountable. But most church members hold a variety of beliefs that often flow from what they picked up from other denominations, books they've read by authors *not* working out of a Reformed framework, or even just general cultural ideas and even misconceptions. This doesn't mean that those other sources are wrong, but they may not conform to what Presbyterians believe.

Presbyterians are part of a family called Reformed churches that began in the 16th century during the Protestant Reformation. It is said that Queen Elizabeth I remarked that the Swiss reformers Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin were more "reformed" than Martin Luther in Germany; they moved even further away from Roman Catholic theology and practice than Luther. Reformed churches also followed a different path from those that eventually became Baptists, Mennonites and Methodists, among others. Anglican and Episcopal churches, while also sharing a Reformation heritage, followed still another trajectory and are sometimes seen as a middle way between Catholicism and Protestantism. More recently we've seen the rise of modern Evangelicalism and non-denominational churches that often reject denominational labels and have charted theological courses that diverge significantly from so-called Mainline denominations. (The PCUSA is considered a

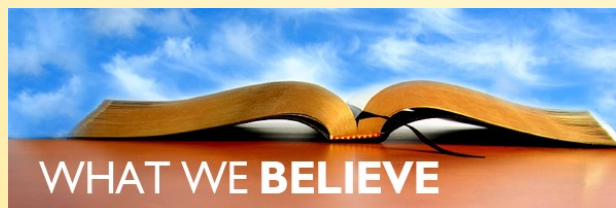
mainline denomination). And if all that's not confusing enough, there are also *other* Presbyterian denominations, including the Presbyterian Church in America, The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and others. And while they all share many core beliefs, they are different from the PCUSA and from each other. I'll be trying to stay within the bounds of PCUSA theology and practice in this and subsequent articles.

At ordinations and installations of pastors and ruling elders, one of the constitutional questions asked is "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?" That's quite a lot to affirm! And you'd think that surely there must be a list of "essential tenets" that could be received and adopted. But you'd be mistaken. A paradox of our theological tradition is that there is no single, unambiguous list of essential tenets, no definitive checklist of Reformed doctrines. Rather, there are certain fundamental propositions that weave their way through our confessions, those diverse theological statements compiled in our Book of Confessions (Part 1 of our PCUSA Constitution) and considered "authentic and reliable expositions."

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Rigby teaches theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and she's compiled a list of seven affirmations derived from the Confessions that are good examples of what is meant by essential tenets.¹ They include:

- The sovereignty of God – God is the sovereign governor of all creation.
- The centrality of Jesus Christ – Jesus Christ stands at the center of all things.

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- The movement of the Holy Spirit – the Holy Spirit lives and moves in the lives of individuals, communities, and the world.
- The gift of creation – creation is “all good” because the sovereign God who made it out of nothing is supremely good.
- The devastation of sin – our rebelliousness against God and our hiding from our Creator has a devastating impact on us and our world.
- The promise of redemption – God will keep God’s promise to redeem all creation.
- The calling of the church -- we, as members of Christ’s body, have particular calling in the world.

Another theologian, the late Rev. Dr. Jack Rogers, was a go-to scholar on our confessions and thought of essential tenets as a series of concentric circles with Jesus at the center. In the next circle are core Protestant values like the authority of scripture and justification by faith through grace. The third circle comprises specifically Reformed concepts like sovereignty, election, covenant, stewardship, sin, and obedience. He notes that “There are many further rings as we attempt to understand the whole counsel of God. We are most sure that we are dealing with essentials as we move toward the center of the circle.”²

So, if we accept what Drs. Rigby and Rogers understand as “essential,” you can see that there is a lot of latitude in what Presbyterians might accept and still be within the bounds of Reformed theology. For example, while the PCUSA ordains women as pastors, elders and deacons, some of the other Presbyterian denominations, like the PCA, don’t. Yet there is no argument that both the PCUSA and the PCA are part of the Reformed family. We might imagine that the ordination of women falls in one of Dr. Rogers’s “further rings.”

Or we may look at atonement (the meaning of Christ’s death on the cross), a doctrine that in some churches or denominations – including some Presbyterian denominations – has a single or very narrow definition. But the PCUSA does not have a defined doctrine of atonement.

Rather, we have a range of images that flow out of the New Testament’s witness to the person and work of Jesus. Our Confession of 1967, one of those “authentic and reliable expositions,” states, “God’s reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery which the Scriptures describe in various ways. It is called the sacrifice of a lamb, a shepherd’s life given for his sheep, atonement by a priest; again it is ransom of a slave, payment of debt, vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty, and victory over the powers of evil. These are expressions of a truth which remains beyond the reach of all theory in the depths of God’s love for humanity. They reveal the gravity, cost, and sure achievement of God’s reconciling work.

I could go on with many more examples. But I hope you can see that our Reformed theological tradition allows for broad exploration of many themes and even for differing views of substantive issues. At the same time, that long tradition that goes all the way back to John Calvin in Geneva in the 1500s also provides boundaries; not every theological notion or practice can fit within it (and perhaps I’ll do a column on what Presbyterians *do not* believe).

And if you are interested in further reading, there are a few good books intended specifically for the everyday churchgoer, including *Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers* by Donald K. McKim; *Presbyterian Beliefs*, also by Don McKim; and *What Unites Presbyterians* by Clifton Kirkpatrick & William H. Hopper, Jr. You may also wish to explore our *Book of Confessions*. It can be downloaded at: www.pcusa.org/resource/book-confessions.

Grace and peace,

Mike

¹<https://highlandspresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/39/2023/01/Some-Essential-Tenets-of-the-Reformed-faith-as-Expressed-in-the-Confessions.pdf>

²<https://www.drjackrogers.com/2008/06/a-quick-guide-to-essential-tenets.html>



Worship News...



**Community
Thanksgiving Service
Sunday, November 24
6:00 p.m.
at South Harborcreek
United Methodist Church**

The service will feature a combined community choir. Worship leadership will include pastors and an ecumenical array of pastors from our community.

Wine and the Word is taking a break until January 12th. Please watch for more information in the January newsletter.

Brunch and a Movie

Please plan to join us for a delightful brunch followed by a short (30 minute) segment of a Christian movie and short discussion time of fellowship. ALL are welcome.



Birthday Sunday for November birthdays will be November 10th after church. Please plan to join your fellow members for some delicious dessert and coffee.



November Worship Leaders

	<u>Liturgists</u>	<u>Greeters</u>
Sun., Nov. 3	Nancy McNally	Barker Family
Sun., Nov. 10	Dave Maille	Carol Mulvin
Sun., Nov. 17	Brian Griffith	Bob and Linda DeAngelo
Sun., Nov. 24	Jasmine Mosier	Marge Suter

Lectionary Readings November 2024

Below are the readings suggested by the Revised Common Lectionary for these months.

Sunday, November 3

Ruth 1:1-18
Deuteronomy 6:1-9
Hebrews 9:11-14

24th Sunday after Pentecost
and Psalm 146 or
and Psalm 119:1-8
Mark 12:28-34

Sunday, November 10

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17
1 Kings 17:8-16
Hebrews 9:24-28

25th Sunday after Pentecost
and Psalm 127 or
and Psalm 146
Mark 12:38-44

Sunday, November 17

1 Samuel 1:4-20
Daniel 12:1-3
Hebrews 10:11-18

26th Sunday after Pentecost
and 1 Samuel 2:1-10 or
and Psalm 16
Mark 13:1-8

Sunday, November 24

2 Samuel 23:1-7
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
Revelation 1:4b-8

Reign of Christ Sunday
and Psalm 132:1-12 (13-18) or
and Psalm 93
John 18:33-37

The Deacons are providing baskets to our **homebound church family**. The **baskets of assorted items** will be delivered during Thanksgiving week. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for donations. Please have your items to the church by November 24. Thank you,
Deacon of the Month



This and That...



Reuse
Recycle
Repurpose

We are still receiving donations for special mission projects. This is an easy way to make a big difference in the lives of people in our community and around the world! Just collect and drop off at church.

♥ **Aluminum Cans** for the Dick Smith Fund to benefit community members with emergency needs.

♥ **Travel Size Personal Care Products** to be given to the homeless at The Upper Room.

♥ **Cancelled Stamps** The Mission Committee is again saving cancelled postage stamps for a great cause. Please place your **cancelled stamps** in the box provided at the back of the sanctuary and they will be given to the Trinity Lutheran Church in Erie for processing. The stamps will be trimmed and sent to an organization who sells them to buy bibles in other languages.

♥ **Used Greeting Cards** to be sent to St Jude's Ranch for them to repurpose and sell in their gift shop and on their website. Please do not cut cards or change cards in anyway. They need them whole for them to be transformed.

Thanksgiving Menu Scramble

1. grnee enba ecelrssao _____
2. setwe otepsaot _____
3. suqhsa _____
4. agyrv _____
5. ppsaleeuca _____
6. iaerrnebrcs _____
7. uetkyr _____
8. lofrdwa dslaa _____
9. rocn _____
10. nufftgis _____
11. mpikpnu orll _____
12. losrl _____
13. anabna raedb _____
14. apelp iep _____
15. msdeha attpeoso _____

(Answer Key on next page)

Church Office Hours

Pastor Mike is usually in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays around 9:00 a.m.

If you have a pastoral emergency,
please call Mike at 412-298-9196.

The secretary's regular office hours are: Monday, Wednesday and Friday
mornings from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

There may be times that the hours may be changed; please call the church office to verify.

Church Office Phone number: 814-899-1031
New Email Address: office@hcpresbyterian.org Website:hcpresbyterian.org

Church Family News...



November Birthdays

- 3 Dale Claypoole
- 8 Jim Butler
- 10 Jacob Graff
- 11 Don Duckett
- 15 Carl Steiner
- 17 Jessie Denniston
- 17 Linda Blum
- 21 Joanne Scott
- 24 Janie Hedlund
- 28 Lisa Baumgardner
- 28 Jonathan Priebe

November Anniversaries

- 2 Rod & Holly Hedlund
- 9 Denny & Linda Blum
- 13 Dave & Jennifer Wedzik
- 28 Lisa Baumgardner & Jonathan Priebe



Prayer List:

For the Lake Erie Presbytery & its leaders; for our pastor, Mike Wilson, for church members, family & friends, we pray.

If someone can be removed from the prayer list or if you have someone to add, please call or email the church office with the information.

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Barb Bemis | Joan Graham | Sandy Spangler |
| Claudia Brown | Derf Hopsecger | Rich Smith |
| John Brown | Judy Johnson | Carl Steiner |
| Margaret Crider | Morgan Johnson | Marge Suter |
| Robin Cuneo | David Lyon | Tina Wasiela |
| Dave English | Dick May | Abigail Wilkinson |
| Fannin Family | Mellish Family | Zanita Zacks-Gabriel |
| Pat Feddersen | Yvonne Peters | |
| | Wilda Resinger | |

Remember Our Homebound

Some of you have asked about what you can do to keep connected to those who struggle to come to worship or participate in church activities. Listed below are some of those you could send a card or a note of encouragement.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Margaret Crider
Twinbrook Room 212
3805 Field Street
Erie, PA 16511 | Jessie Dennison
Wellmore Unit 4129
580 Robert Daniel Drive
Daniel Island, SC 29492 | Jacque Foust
8467 East Lake Rd.
Erie, PA 16511 |
| Dick May
6568 Iroquois Avenue
Harborcreek, PA 16421 | Peggy Nelson
2 Gibson St. Apt. 102
North East, PA 16428 | Esther Noonan
7554 McGill Road
Harborcreek, PA 16421 |



- 1. green bean casserole
- 2. sweet potatoes
- 3. squash
- 4. gravy
- 5. applesauce
- 6. cranberries
- 7. turkey
- 8. waldorf salad
- 9. corn
- 10. stuffing
- 11. pumpkin roll
- 12. rolls
- 13. banana bread
- 14. apple pie
- 15. mashed potatoes

Answer Key

Thanksgiving Menu Scramble





- Yvonne Peters
41 W. Gore Rd. Rm.113
Erie, PA. 16509
- Carl Steiner
c/o Heather Steiner
4847 Tamarlac Lane
Erie, PA 16505
- Ron Washe
4147 Bell Street
Erie, PA 16511

- Wilda Resinger
5456 East Lake Road
Barnabas Court South
Room 120
Erie, PA 16511
- Sandy Spangler
227 W. 22nd Street
Room 9
Erie, PA 16509





November 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		Elder of the Month: Sue Kellerman (717) 586-8357 Deacon of the Month: Linda DeAngelo 814-746-7372			1	2 Fall Swiss Steak Dinner 4:30-6:30 p.m.
3 9:15 a.m. In-Person & Live Stream Worship Brunch and a Movie following Worship	4 Women's AA 5:00 p.m.	5	6 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal 7:00 p.m.	7	8	9
Pastor Mike on study leave November 4—November 10						
10 9:15 a.m. In-Person & Live Stream Worship Birthday Sunday Celebration following worship	11 DEACONS Deacon's Meeting 2:00 p.m.  Session Meeting 6:30 p.m. Women's AA 5:00 p.m.	12	13  Choir Rehearsal 6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal 7:00 p.m.	14	15	16
17 9:15 a.m. In-Person & Live Stream Worship Brunch and a Movie following worship	18 Women's AA 5:00 p.m.	19	20  Choir Rehearsal 6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal 7:00 p.m.	21	22	23
24 9:15 a.m. In-Person & Live Stream Worship Brunch and a Movie following worship Community Thanksgiving Service 6:00 p.m. South Harborcreek UMC	25 Women's AA 5:00 p.m.	26	27  Choir Rehearsal 6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal 7:00 p.m.	28 Thanksgiving Day Church Office Closed	29	30