

Shenandoah Press

Volume 11, Issue 7

September 2025

A Message from our General Presbyter

What does being a follower of Christ mean to you?

As our congregations have conversations around inviting people to church and back to church – what is it you would say to a visitor about the congregation you are a part of?

What makes you excited about your community of faith? What challenges you? How does following Jesus effect how you live your life? The answers to any of these questions would be helpful for a visitor to hear and might resonate with what they are seeking.



For a long time, I have said that for the church to grow the folks who are currently a part of the church need to be able to share what faith means to them. And it doesn't need to be complicated. Sharing one's faith is an act of authenticity, and vulnerability. And while at times we may find it scary – remember we are not alone, God gives us every tool we need!

So, our challenge this fall is to practice sharing our faith and asking others about theirs! Let's share our stories along with our time and talents as together we follow Christ into the future.

*Blessings,
Bronwen*



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You may view the documents and recording of our Stated Meeting of Presbytery on August 23, 2025

on our web page:

<https://shenpres.org/presbytery-meeting/>.



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Associate General Presbyter—Nancy Meehan Yao

I have a friend, who, as a small but noisy and rambunctious child, often heard from her mother: “Why don’t you go outside and see if I am elsewhere?”

Meaning, get out from under my feet.

I have said something similar, when our 2 boys were small. Sometimes even more emphatically: Go. Out. Side.

Jesus tells the church much the same thing: Go. “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28: 18-19)

I wonder if we have forgotten how to do that, how to go outside and be part of God’s loving action in the world and in our communities. Oh, I agree that there is a need for us to gather together, to hear God’s Word. But we often focus only on our internal view: how many (or few) people came to Sunday worship, how the church finances are doing, how we are not the church we used to be.

However, Jesus’ command is pretty clear: Go. Don’t stay inside these walls. Go out and join what God is doing in this world.

I know that some of us are already doing this: in community food programs, in caring for neighborhood school children through a backpack or volunteer program. Streaming our worship services might be seen as a way of “going out.”

But what else might God be calling us to do? Share worship with a skilled nursing facility or group home? Be the “diaper depot” or water spot along the community’s parade route? Have a church team that works with the local Habitat for Humanity or building ramps for those who need them? Advocate for the poor and hungry?

The old ways of “if you build it, they will come,” or even “if you feed them, they will come” no longer apply in the ways they did in previous generations.

The poet Mary Oliver has famously written: “Tell me. What will you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

What will you do, what will we do, with the precious gift we have received through Jesus Christ? How will we go out into the world and share and show that?

Blessings as you go out-

Nancy



Advent Lectionary Overview

Thursday, October 23, at 6:30, via Zoom.

Advent begins November 30, and we begin the Church Year anew as we look forward to the coming of the Infant Jesus. We will, via zoom, be discussing Scripture and themes for Advent, Christmas Eve, creative possibilities for Christmas Day worship, and the first Sunday of Christmas.

For those who are Revised Common Lectionary preachers/teachers, this is Year A, a Matthew year. We will also look at the Narrative Lectionary offerings for Advent. Please bring your ideas to share with others. Hope to see you there!

[Register Here.](#)

CHANGING THE WORLD

A new Confirmation Curriculum

We know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ changes lives, and the world. We know that Christ calls us to go out into the world, sharing God's love (Matthew 28: 19-20). How do we equip our young people to do that, and what is the role of confirmation in that development?



CHANGING THE WORLD, by Mark Hinds and the Presbyterian Outlook, is a revised confirmation curriculum, which focuses on more than joining the church. Rather it is about equipping and preparing young people to claim their missional vocation and identity as a follower of Christ.

To purchase the digital download:

<https://pres-outlook.org/product/changing-the-world-confirmation-for-the-missional-church/>

To view a sample: https://images.pres-outlook.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/changing-the-world-sample_24.17.1.pdf



Just weeks after marking his 21st year of service to Charles Town Presbyterian Church, Pastor John Bethard had the honor of baptizing the baby of the very first child he baptized when he came to Charles Town in 2004.

Franklin Presbyterian Church

Submitted by Deborah Beam, CRE Franklin Pres Church

Franklin Presbyterian Church members participated in two special intergenerational activities this summer: A Pentecost paint party and VBS.



During the paint party we learned about Pentecost, participants learned different paint techniques, and we all enjoyed red, orange, and yellow foods! Our artwork was displayed on Pentecost Sunday.

VBS focused on Growing in the Son by studying several parables. We learned about faith, patience, and love through parables Jesus taught. The farm theme had us growing seeds, learning how to spin wool, hear a book written and illustrated by a teen member and visiting with several animals found on the farm. We finished the week with a children's program where they sang songs, showed how they learned to sing and sign Jesus Loves Me, and the children led the congregation in the Lord's Prayer that they learned.



Hunger Funds Report

What's in a name?

- “Two-cents-a-meal”
- “Four-cents-a-meal”
- “Nickels for Hunger”
- “Pennies for Hunger”
- “Penny Power” ...

submitted by Sara Holben,
Hunger Funds sub-committee,
Commission on Mission & Outreach



There are a lot of names that are used for the Cents-ability program.

Whatever name you know this program by, the idea has always remained the same: when we combine our few “cents” together, we have the “ability” to make a difference in fighting hunger.

Since 2023, **forty-seven** of the churches in our presbytery have been contributing to the “Hunger Fund” (our presbytery’s name for the Cents-ability program). All “Hunger Funds” received are used to support organizations fighting hunger. (60% remains local to our presbytery; 40% goes to regional/national/international organizations.)

Since the beginning of **2025**, those 47 churches in our Presbytery have given **\$21,822** to the Hunger Fund. That’s a lot of “penny power”!

In a letter from the Rockbridge Area Relief Association (RARA - located in Lexington VA), the Executive Director wrote to us:

“Thank you for your Cents-ability Hunger Fund contribution of \$241.00 on April 11, 2025, to help our neighbors in need. Your generous support is essential in a time when we are experiencing unprecedented demand for our services. For instance, we are averaging 877 monthly visits to our Neighborhood Grocery in 2025 compared to 500 to 600 in previous years! ... In July [of 2024], a local business closure left many people, who previously held well-paying, stable jobs facing unemployment for the first time. We received a call from a woman who had been a stay-at-home mother but now had to find work after her husband lost that job. The family dipped into their retirement funds to make ends meet, but needed help paying their electric bill until they could both secure new employment. RARA provided short-term assistance with their bill and recommended they visit the Neighborhood Grocery to stretch their budget in the meantime. This is one example of how interconnected the need for sufficient food and warm, safe shelter are, as well as how easy it can be to find yourself in this situation. Thanks to the help of supporters like you, RARA is here for families like those who are in need.”

In the end, the name we call this program doesn’t matter as much as what all those contributions can do together. Thank you for your support of this important ministry!

To find out how you can be a part of the Cents-ability program of our Presbytery, visit: <https://shenpres.org/cents-ability/> and look for special “Cents-ability” hand-outs and information available at our next in-person Presbytery meeting (November 15 at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Staunton, VA).

Online Payments

It is an exciting time!
We now have the ability to make some payments online through our website.

Here is what you can do:

- ◆ Churches may send in their acceptances
- ◆ Churches may send in their “Cents-ability” donations
- ◆ Churches and individuals may contribute to our Stated Meeting Mission Offering

Place your camera over the QR code to the link, or go to [our webpage](#) to make your payments.

If you have any questions, please contact the presbytery office at 540-433-2556.



Western North Carolina Mission Trip

October 26 – November 1, 2025

Shenandoah Presbytery's Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO) invites you to serve together this fall. Our 20-person mission team will be hosted by **Canton Presbyterian Church**, where lodging, meals, and fellowship will be shared throughout the week. The cost for the trip with lodging, food, and transportation will be determined at CMO's September 7 meeting.



Living & Serving Together

Volunteers will stay at Canton Presbyterian Church, which provides mattresses, kitchen facilities, and showers.

The church can accommodate up to 20 workers, ages 16 and older. (Youth under 18 must be accompanied overnight by a parent or guardian.)

The mission week begins with orientation and work assignments from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and United Methodist Committee on Relief partners.

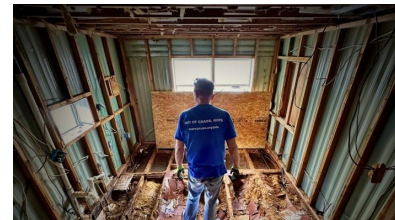


Hands-On Mission Work

The scope of work will be shared a week before the trip, but past projects have included:

- Drywall installation
- Gutting and repairing homes
- Painting and deck repair
- Preparing campers for cold weather

Even a year after the devastating floods, many residents of Canton are still living in temporary housing, and your service will make a tangible difference in their lives.



Support Roles Needed Too

Not all mission work happens on the construction site. We're also seeking one or two volunteers who would like to serve by **planning meals, purchasing groceries, and preparing evening dinners** for the team.

Next Steps

Registration details will be sent in late September by Anne Waple, Disaster Recovery Coordinator for the Presbytery of Western North Carolina.

If you're ready to serve, please contact: **Rev. April H. Cranford** at acranford@wp-church.com or (540) 414-4427



CMO co-chairs **Dave Thalman and April Cranford** look forward to serving alongside you in mission. Please share this opportunity with your church family and mission team.



Rick Hill Sings Gordon Lightfoot

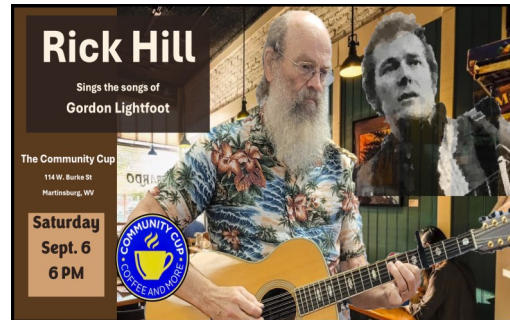
Rick Hill, retired Presbyterian Pastor and folksinger, will perform songs written by Gordon Lightfoot at the Community Cup, 114 W. Burke St. Martinsburg, WV on Saturday, September 6, from 6-8 PM. There is no fee, but donations are welcome.

Rick Hill has been singing folk music for over 60 years performing for churches, youth groups, coffeehouses and schools up and down the East Coast. Music was a large part of his ministry as a pastor and he continues to use music in his supply preaching. Peter, Paul and Mary, Simon and Garfunkel, Tom Paxton, and Gordon Lightfoot were all influential in the kind of songs he sings and the way he presents his music. He encourages his audiences to sing along with songs, often teaching them songs they might not know. In June Rick did a show at The Community Cup of all Peter, Paul and Mary songs. For this concert he decided to do Gordon Lightfoot songs because he knew some and wanted to learn some others.

The Community Cup is a New Worshiping Community of Shenandoah Presbytery in downtown Martinsburg. It is both a Coffee Shop and a place where those who struggling with life can find a variety of support. Rick serves on the Board of The Community Cup.

For more information, you can visit Rick's website - www.ricksfolk.com

The community Cup is also on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityCupCoffeeNWC>

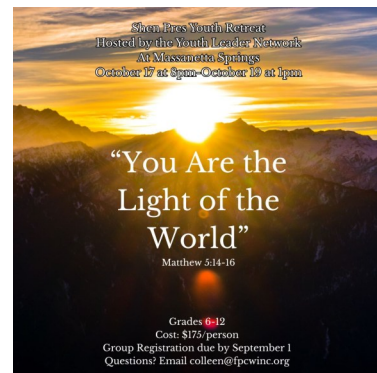


Shenandoah Presbytery Youth Retreat!

Calling all youth and their leaders, either volunteer or paid! The Shenandoah Presbytery Youth Leader Network is hosting our second youth retreat! This year's retreat is **October 17-19th**, at Massanetta Springs! If you are ready to sign up, please fill out [this form](#), or reach out to [Colleen Stearns](#), our Registration Coordinator! Group registrations are due September 1st!

Do you have youth that you think would be interested, but you don't have someone that is specifically in charge of Youth Ministry? Let Colleen know! Members of our Youth Leader Network are happy to come speak with your church or youth group!

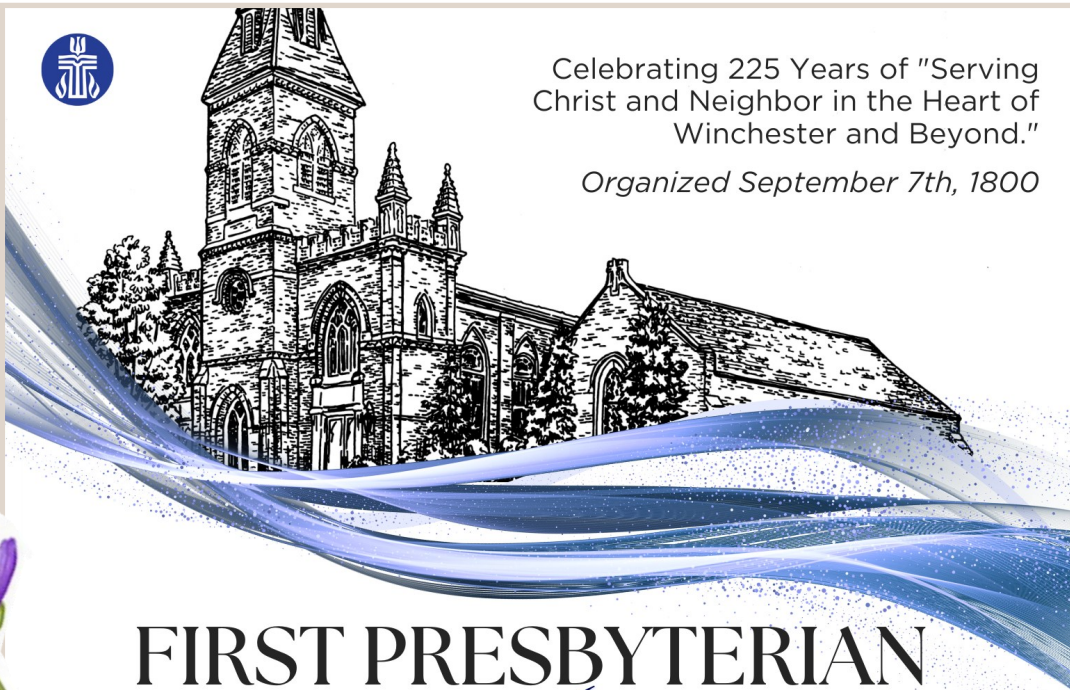
Would your congregation be interested in helping supply a meal, sponsoring meal supplies, or transporting a meal to our retreat if your church is close to Massanetta? If you think your congregation or members would be interested in helping in some way with this need, please reach out to Colleen Stearns!





Celebrating 225 Years of "Serving
Christ and Neighbor in the Heart of
Winchester and Beyond."

Organized September 7th, 1800



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

225th Anniversary

A Special Day of Worship, Reflection, and Fellowship



Sunday
Sept 7, 2025



Worship
11:00 AM

Join us for a Potluck after Worship

We will provide the main entrée and dessert; we kindly ask that you bring a shareable side dish.



(540) 662-3824



fpcwinc.org



116 South Loudoun St., Winchester, VA

Winchester First Presbyterian Church wants to share their upcoming celebration on September 7th, the 225 year Anniversary of FPC's founding!

Here is the event link: <https://fpcwinc.org/events/225th-anniversary/2025-09-07>

They are also selling commemorative t-shirts and stickers that benefit our Youth Ministry budget! - Those can be viewed through the link above as well.



≡ **SAVE THE DATE** ≡

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Graham Taylor OPC-WATTS

Concert & Meal Fundraiser Event

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Concert: 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

OPC Picnic Shelter

Featuring:
Murphy's
Bluegrass Bandits

*All Proceeds Benefit WATTS
 & Opequon's WATTS Hosting Fund*

Concert Tickets: \$20 each

Kids 18 and under are FREE!

Purchase Concert Tickets:

- ▶ **OPC Online Giving Portal**—select the "GT-WATTS Concert" Fund
- ▶ **Cash/check**—made out to OPC and labeled "GT-WATTS Concert"
- ▶ **At the door**—cash/check only

(Optional) **Fried Chicken Dinner**
Tickets: \$10 each

Must be pre-purchased by September 14!

Pre-Purchase Dinner Tickets:

- ▶ **OPC Online Giving Portal**—select the "GT-WATTS Dinner" Fund
- ▶ **Cash/check**—made out to OPC and labeled "GT-WATTS Dinner"

Access OPC's Online Giving Portal:

- ▶ www.opequonchurch.org/giving
- ▶ **Scan QR code**—on front of this card



James Atwood Institute for Congregational Courage Event September 24–27, 2025, at Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center

The Reverend James Atwood was a member of Shenandoah Presbytery. The James Atwood Institute for Congregational Courage is an ecumenical project of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship to equip clergy, lay leaders, and community members for gun violence prevention education and action with their congregations.

Inspired by the late James Atwood, a Presbyterian pastor, avid hunter and lifelong advocate for reasonable gun regulation, the Institute brings together faith-based activists, and regional and national experts to provide hands-on training, skills and game-changing strategies. Each year the Atwood Institute counters an epidemic of gun violence and suffering by nurturing the Christ-centered courage and action of congregations committed to saving lives.

This September, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is offering the James Atwood Institute for Congregational Courage event September 24–27, 2025, at Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA. This year's theme is "Gun Violence Prevention Ministry for Such a Time as This," and we are thrilled to welcome Rev. Sharon Risher as our keynote speaker.

This gathering is more than a conference—it's a space for healing, courage-building, and equipping our congregations to confront the crisis of gun violence with faithful action.

Here's how you can help:

- Register if you haven't already. <https://ppf.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/ppf/event.jsp?event=373&>
- Forward this to five people you know who care deeply about peace, faith, and gun violence prevention.
- Reach out personally to someone in your network—a colleague, a pastor, a friend—who would thrive in a space like this.





MASSANETTA SPRINGS
2026 PROGRAM DATES

Confirmation Retreat
1/30-2/1

Ringing at the Springs
2/13-15

Netta Day Camp: Spring at the Springs
3/30-4/3

Easter Respite
4/6-10

Netta Day Camps
9 weeks starting 6/8

Middle School Conferences
6/18-21, 6/23-26, 7/9-12, 7/14-17

Bible & Church Music Conference
7/19-25

Called Together
7/27-30

Keep Awake
11/20-22



Massanetta Springs



**PRESBYTERY OF
SHENANDOAH**

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ShenPres.org



Shenandoah Presbytery

A Community of Christ for Worship, Nurture and Mission

SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY is a covenant body where:

- CONGREGATIONS are empowered to be centers for mission
- PEOPLE OF GOD are equipped to be Disciples of Christ in a challenging world
- CHURCH LEADERS and members are nurtured and strengthened for service
- OPEN COMMUNICATION and information are used constructively and creatively to keep us connected



Dates to Remember!

September 2025

- 1 - Office Closed for Labor Day
- 4 - CRE Oversight 9:30 am
- 6 - CMO 9:30 am
- 8 - CCVT 1:00 pm
- 10 - CPM 10:00 am
- 11 - COM 10:00 am

At Massanutten Church

- 17 - Staff Meeting 10:00 am
at Presbytery Office
- 17 - CNCD 1:30 pm
- 18 - CER 9:30 am
- 22 - Shenandoah Press Deadline
- 23 - Nominations 10:00 am
- 25 - CPA 9:30 pm

Other Dates

- 13 - Rolls, Registers & Digitizing Records 10:00 am
at Massanetta Springs
- 18 - Pastors' Meeting 12:00 pm
- 20 - CREs Gathering 10:00 am
at Massanetta Springs
- 27 - Ethiopian Partnership 1:00 pm

* Unless otherwise noted, all meetings
will be held via Zoom.