



Shenandoah Press

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A Message from our General Presbyter

Several church sessions have heard me ask the question “what happens if your pastor gets hit by a bus? Who knows where the passwords are to the computer, etc.?”

The good folks at the Buena Vista church and I are figuring that out as we mourn the unexpected death of their pastor and my beloved husband Howard.

Thank you all for your messages of care and for the prayers surrounding us that I/we have felt, supporting us all during this time. I know that grace abounds as my family and I navigate this unexpected future. Thank you to the marvelous presbytery staff and all those who have picked up what I have had to put down for a time.

As we share this season of Advent, waiting for not only the one who came to us as a baby but who will come again, think on how you can share and show the overwhelming love of God, who holds us close in times of trouble.

May this Advent bring you solace; Christmas bring you joy, and the New Year bring us hope as we live into what the future brings, knowing that we do not go alone for we have Jesus Christ and each other.

With deep gratitude,

Bronwen



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It may feel dark, at this moment. The days are getting shorter, the world is getting colder, and the news often seems only bad. But we are not to grieve as those without hope, to paraphrase the Apostle Paul. We affirm this as we light the candle on the first Sunday in Advent, the Candle of Hope.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined,” Scripture tells us. The prophet Isaiah spoke those words of hope so long ago, and they still resonate today.



As those who know the light of God’s goodness, we are called to share the light and to be the light to others. If we look, can we see that many people are walking in darkness: the darkness of poverty, of hunger, of SNAP benefits cut, of jobs eliminated or furloughed or lost.

So what does walking in the light, sharing the light with others look like for you? For Community Cup in Martinsburg, it is a community dinner on Wednesday nights, with warmth and hot food, devotions and welcome. For many congregations, it is supplementing current local food pantries, giving out gift cards to local grocery stores, or creating and restocking “blessing boxes” with non-perishable goods. Some congregations will function as a “warm shelter” this winter, others will provide warm clothing, or support for heating fuel, electricity bills, and wood for wood stoves.

John the Gospel writer says: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” (John 1: 5)

If we worship a Savior who has conquered darkness, (and we do), then let us continue in spreading light to others. Let us walk in that light. Let us testify to that light, that others may see, and know, the goodness of the Lord. How will your congregation spread the light of Christ in physical, incarnational ways? Please share your stories with us and with others!

May the Light of Christ shine in our hearts, in our congregations, and in the world.

May you know deep blessings this Advent, Christmas and Epiphany season, and throughout the year.

Nancy



SAVE The Date!

LOOKING AHEAD: STEWARDSHIP is a year round expression of generosity and gratitude to God.

On Thursday, March 5, via zoom, and on Saturday March 7, in person, Rev. Erin Skinner, Presbyterian Foundation Ministry Relations Officer, and Rev. Dr. Nancy Meehan Yao, Associate General Presbyter, will be leading workshops on Stewardship and Generosity, including:

*Save
the Date*

How to begin
What to do if you are the “Stewardship Team”
What Stewardship can look like, even if your church has never had a Stewardship Program

LOOK FOR MORE INFO IN EARLY 2026

207th Stated Meeting of Shenandoah Presbytery



The youth of the church led worship and the Education Time.

“This was my first meeting ever on YouTube. Just wanted to thank Shenandoah Presbytery for this opportunity.”

Jennifer Beidler, Tomahawk Church



Rebecca Lister, Cooks Creek Church as of the spring of 2026



Keenan Rodgers, Board of Pensions Church Consultant



Lauren Rogers, PCUSA Special Offerings



HR Rev. Doug Sterrett joins Shenandoah Presbytery

To read the Highlights and Minutes of the 207th Stated Meeting of Shenandoah Presbytery, held on Saturday, November 15, 2025 at Covenant Presbyterian Church, visit our webpage: <https://shenpres.org/presbytery-meeting/>. You will also find a link to view the recording of the meeting.

Lent Overview

I know you are reading this even before Christmas and the turn to the New Year.

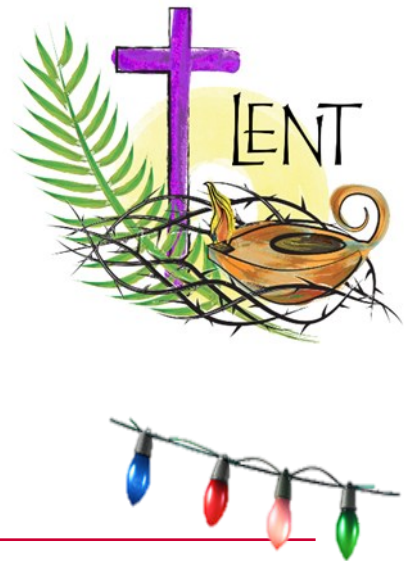
But...

Lent begins early in 2026, as Ash Wednesday is February 18. Please join me for a Lent Overview, looking at the Scripture texts for the Sundays and special days of Lent and Easter, lifting up themes for preaching and worship, as well as looking at creative ways to live into those weeks of preparation.

The Lent Overview will be on Saturday January 17, beginning at 9:30 am, via Zoom. A registration link is available on the Shenandoah Presbytery website or you can [register here](#).

Hope to see you there!

Nancy



Community Harmony: Church Space Welcomes Bluegrass Group

Stewardship + Partnership = Beautiful Music

Sunnyside Presbyterian Church and the Bluegrass group, "God Dan Jam", are making beautiful music together.

Back in the summer of 2025, the group needed a space to practice and/or *jam* together on a weekly basis. One of the group's founders, Dan McCoig (The "Dan" in God Dan Jam), reached out to a SPC session member, Barbara Wolford, in hopes of finding a spot. Dan had a sit down with Barbara, and the pastor of SPC, Charly Franks, and a plan to share the facilities with the Jammers was created and subsequently wholehearted approved by the SPC Session. Since then, toe tapping bluegrass grooves can be heard along the Sunnyside of Winchester's North Frederick Pike each Wednesday evening from 6:30 to 8:30pm.

The GDJ sessions involve 6-12 local musicians whose skill level ranges from advanced beginner to professional. It's a very friendly and welcoming group that encourages everyone to improve on their instrument and their singing.

The repertoire is traditional bluegrass while the format involves musicians sitting in a circle, each member calling out a song which they in turn begin. The rest of the members play along and sing harmonies at the choruses. Improvisations are encouraged and enjoyed by all.

Spectators are welcome and some of the congregation members have availed themselves of the opportunity to hear live music.

This partnership allows the congregation of SPC to put the love of God into action through sharing their facility with this group of musicians. Often local churches face the challenge of using church facilities for maximum good to their congregations and communities. The arrangement between SPC and the GDJ provides the opportunity to obey the command of Christ to love each other and lift each other up.

There is great anticipation of how this partnership will develop over the coming weeks and months. Special music during worship and church events, community outreach events with live local music, and perhaps the formation of the next great bluegrass band? No mind has conceived what God has in store for the Wednesday night God Dan Jam and the congregation of Sunnyside Presbyterian Church!

News from the Committee on Mission & Outreach

\$38,530 was granted to nine congregations who submitted grant requests for domestic and global mission projects by the October 15, 2025, deadline. The Shenandoah Presbytery has been entrusted with bequests from dedicated congregation members who valued global and domestic mission and those bequests are the sources for funding mission projects. The CMO seeks to fund projects that “empower congregations to be centers for mission . . . sending servant leaders to minister at home and abroad.” The mission proposals that were funded achieve the goal.

To make the grant process more effective, the CMO is enacting changes that take effect January 2, 2026.

- ◆ All grants are in one of two categories, global and domestic
- ◆ There is one application form for all grants. There will be two deadlines instead of one.
- ◆ The new deadlines are March 1 and October 1

Information about grants and application forms, is found on the Presbytery web site under Committees - Committee on Mission & Outreach, and under Resources - Scholarships & Grants.

Visit the Shenandoah Presbytery web site at <https://shenpres.org/scholarship-grants/>

Submitted by Frances Craig, CMO Member



A New Resource Available to Shenandoah Presbytery and Friends!

Greetings from Circleville and Seneca Rocks, West Virginia - yes, Almost Heaven!

The congregations have been working to renovate the church manse located just across from the Circleville Presbyterian Church. Thanks to the generous support of the presbytery, the manse now enjoys a new roof. Thank you, Shenandoah Presbytery!

But that's not all. Work teams coming from as far as Western Pennsylvania have installed new flooring throughout the upstairs. Walls have been painted, bathrooms updated, kitchen upgraded, comfortable and sturdy furniture brought in, new air and heat, and artwork - all to make the manse an ideal location for churches looking to hold retreats, pastors and elders looking for a peaceful getaway surrounded by the largest, most scenic mountains in the state. It has been used by visiting Bible School teams and has attracted small groups from as far as Minnesota.

Equipped with a large kitchen, multiple bedrooms, and a large meeting space downstairs, the manse can easily host your small group or family any time of year. When the weather allows, there are a number of activities nearby, including caverns, hiking, mountain climbing, fishing and horseback riding. The hike to the top of Seneca Rocks is exhilarating, and the view from atop Spruce Knob at 4863 feet is breathtaking! And don't miss West Virginia's Second Best Hot Dog at Yokum's in Seneca Rocks where you can enjoy the country store and grill.

Circleville and Seneca Rocks now offer this retreat site to presbytery and friends. Leader-guided Women's and Men's Retreats are also available. The churches only ask for a donation as the Lord would lead to help support its upkeep and utilities.

If interested or if you have questions, please email circlevillepresbyterian@gmail.com, or phone Rhiannon at 540-539-4954

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Gary Cecil, Temp. Supply

Greetings from the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations!



The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), along with Presbyterian Women, will form a joint delegation to attend the [70th Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW70\)](#) to be held March 9–20, 2026. CSW is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

We are proud to be a part of this community of over 5,000 participants from around the world, including UN Member States, UN programs, agencies, and civil society who come together to further gender equity.

The priority theme for the 70th session is “Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers” and the review theme is “Women’s full and effective participation and decision making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls ([agreed conclusions of the sixty-fifth session](#)).

We are reaching out to you to nominate people from your presbyteries and synods to participate in CSW70. If you know anyone who would benefit from this learning and leadership opportunity, please have them fill out [this application form](#) before **January 4th, 2025**. Due to high demand and limited spots, we recommend submitting the application before the deadline. Individuals selected as delegates should have some knowledge of or interest in the issues addressed by CSW70. In addition, efforts will be made to select a delegation that reflects the diversity of PC(USA) including age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity, and geographical distribution. Priority will also be given to young adult Presbyterian applicants (ages 18-30). More information on CSW, expectations of delegates, the tentative schedule, and more can be found on the application form. In addition, [here](#) is an overview from CSW69 for a flavor of what CSW looks like each year.

We look forward to having delegates from your Mid Council join us here in New York in March! If you have any questions regarding CSW or the CSW application, please do not hesitate to reach out to Clare Balsan, our Advocacy Associate, by email (clare.balsan@pcusa.org) or phone (502-612-6130).

Grace and Peace,
Sue

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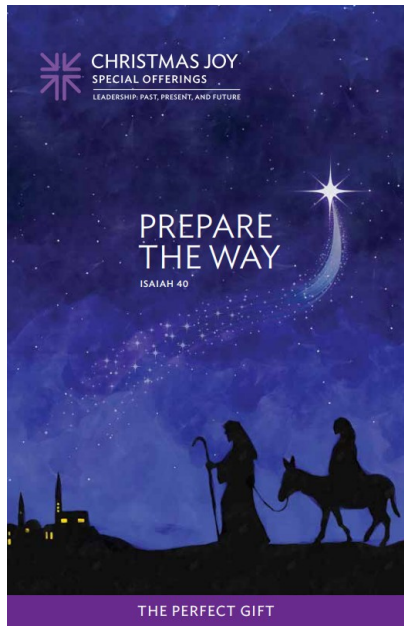
Church Treasurers

Please note:

2026 pledge amounts are due by **December 15, 2025**.

In order to be included in the 2025 calendar year, church remittances are due in the office by **Tuesday, January 13, 2026**.

If you have any questions, please contact Heather at bookkeeper@shenpres.org



Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we lift up past, present, and future leaders of the church. God has blessed the church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering provides support for Presbyterian church workers and their families in their time of need and leadership development and education for communities of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.



The Overstory Community School, soon to be in collaboration with the Hebron Presbyterian Church, is looking for a 12-15 passenger van. Please contact Hebron Church, 540-885-1648, if you have one or know of one reasonably priced or donated to a 401c3 school.

Submitted by Rev Hank Scoggins, Hebron Church

Westminster Church Advent Ministry and Mission

December 7, Advent Fair 3-5:00 p.m.

December 14, Christmas Cantata at 10:30 a.m.
and The Nativity Trail 6:00-7:00 p.m.

December 15-22, Host W.A.R.M. Cold Weather Shelter

December 24, 5:00 and 7:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight Services



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THE WISE MEN, BEING WISE, GOT ALL OF THEIR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING DONE WEEKS BEFORE THE RUSH



**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!

December 2025

- 3 - Staff Meeting 10:00 am
at Presbytery Office
- 4 - CRE Oversight 4:00 pm
- 11 - COM 9:30 am
- 18 - Pastors' Meeting 12:00 pm

Dec. 19—Jan. 4 - Presbytery Office
Closed for Christmas and New Year

January 2026

- 5 - CCVT 1:00 pm
- 8 - COM 9:30 am
- 8 - CER 9:30 am
- 8 - CRE Oversight 4:00 pm
- 13 - Nominations 10:00 am
- 14 - CPM 10:00 am
- 15 - Pastors' Meeting 12:00 pm
- 15 - CPA 1:30 pm
- 21 - Staff Meeting 11:00 am
- 21 - CNCD 1:30pm
- 22 - Shenandoah Press Deadline
- 27 - CPC 10:00 am

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

