

THE NEXUS *FEBRUARY 2024*

Presbyterian Church
570-421-5821

55 Smith Street
espresbyterian@gmail.com

East Stroudsburg, PA 18301
espresbyterian.com

Nicki's News

Dear friends and members,

There are many others, like me, who did not grow up with Ash Wednesday services where Ashes were placed in a cross shape on our foreheads. I can recall feeling a bit uncomfortable with this practice when I first experienced it at a Presbyterian Church. I cringed at the idea of going forward to have the black ashes with their gritty texture placed on my forehead for all to see. I kept thinking of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them," He says. Don't sound a trumpet when you give alms. Don't pray ostentatiously on street corners so others will see you. Don't disfigure your face when you fast. Give alms, pray, and fast in secret, "and your father who sees in secret will reward you."

Then here I am being asked to do just that. However, in conversation with a pastor, and reading the literature he gave me on it, I came to appreciate this practice and wanted to implement it in my future ministry setting. What that article noted was how in baptism, ministers will make the sign of the cross either on the head or in the blessing. This is like an invisible cross we carry with us all the time.

That said, on Ash Wednesday, we aren't marking ourselves to be pious. We are making the cross we received in Baptism visible again inviting us to acknowledge our impiety, our lack of repentance, our apathy to the suffering in the world. I invite you to come to either of the Ash Wednesday services and be reminded of our need to repent and live into our baptism more fully.

In His Peace,
Pastor Nicki

Nexus Deadline

The Nexus deadline for the March issue is Monday, February 26th.



Congratulations!

To Douglas and Mary Anne Gilbert on the birth of their second child, Walter Douglas Gilbert. Walter was born on Saturday, January 13th. He weighed in at 7 pounds and 11 ounces and was 20 inches long!

Mom, dad and proud sister, Emery Grace are doing well. Congratulations to all of them and Aunt Carole and Grandma Wendy too!

Birthdays:

Celebrating birthdays in **February** are:

Diane Huffman, Dick McNally, Cort Huffman, Bill Cramer and Kylee Vogel.



Anniversaries:

Celebrating an anniversary in **February** are:

Ed and Ann Mae West
Dennis and Jenny Collins

Nexus Sponsor

If you are interested in sponsoring an issue, the cost is \$35.00. A new sign-up sheet is in the lobby for next year's issues.

Our Ash Wednesday services will be at noon and again at 6:00 p.m. on February 14th.



Are You Being Called?

Many have asked what is going on with the roof. The process to obtain bids took longer than any could anticipate. The bidding did not turn out as we hoped. God appears to be calling us in a different direction to this roof problem, but discernment of which direction God is guiding us is needed. The Finance and Property Committee has felt led to gather a task team to explore where God is guiding us in the next steps. Pastor Nicki will be leading the team. Meeting times will be determined by the availability of those on the task team when it has been fully formed. Do you feel God calling you to discern with fellow disciples where God is leading us in this? If you have further questions or would like to be a part of this task team, please reach out to anyone on the Finance and Property Committee: Jim Hall, Chris Neighbors, Rick Sanker, Judy Schreck, Tom Long, Chris Vogel. You are invited to call the office or let the Pastor know if you would like to be a part of this task team.



Youth Group

This month Youth Group will be meeting on our regularly scheduled 4th Sunday of the month from 2-4. We have some exciting plans to surprise you. To find out the surprise you must come. We will be meeting at Christ Presbyterian Church of the Slate Belt on **February 25**. Hope to see all the youth there!

Scriptural Reasoning Sessions

As was shared last month, although Inspirarity Dialogue sessions provided enriching exchanges, we have transitioned into another Interfaith learning opportunity called Scriptural Reasoning (SR). Supported by Cambridge University, Scriptural Reasoning (SR) serves as a tool for interfaith dialogue, where people of different faiths come together to read and reflect on their scriptures. Unlike some forms of interfaith engagement, SR focuses not only on seeking agreement, but rather on exploring texts and their interpretations across faith boundaries, and on learning to 'disagree better'. This often leads to a deeper understanding of others' scriptures and one's own, as well as fostering strong bonds across faith communities.

Join us on Sunday, February 11th for the second S.R. It will be held here at ESPC at 2:30. Refreshments will be served. For those not attending in person, join online at:

bit.ly/scripturalreasonin



Lenten Meal and Message

As in past years, we will be offering an opportunity to take time during Lent to focus on growing in God through a Wednesday evening Bible Study. Like last year, we will begin with a light meal followed by a Bible Study and rotating the Bible Study location between the three shared ministry churches. The first one will be on February 21 at 6:00 pm at Christ Presbyterian Church of the Slate Belt. The Bible Study is based on the book, *A Witness at The Cross* by Amy-Jill Levine.

This bible study displays how each person at the cross had distinct roles. Each presents a distinct picture of the death of Jesus. At every gathering, we will learn from individuals or groups, at the cross, as we learn the meaning and messages of their experiences. We will see, learn and grow through the lens of those many witnesses at the cross. You can join us in person using the schedule below for church location or you can join us on zoom using the following link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84566665100?pwd=K0FRMIRsVGZGbmE5dWV0cmEyc1Yvdz09>

February 21 Christ Presbyterian Church of the Slate Belt

February 28 East Stroudsburg Presbyterian Church

March 6 First Presbyterian Church of Stroudsburg

March 13 Christ Presbyterian Church of the Slate Belt

March 20 East Stroudsburg Presbyterian Church

March 27 First Presbyterian Church of Stroudsburg



February Meetings & Events

Feb. 4	Adult Ed., 9:00 Worship, 10:00
Feb. 6	Pocono Interfaith Council, 9:00
Feb. 7	Intercessory Prayer, 5:30
Feb. 11	Adult Ed., 9:00 Worship, 10:00 Session Meeting Scripture Reasoning, 2:30
Feb. 13	Women's Circle
Feb. 14	Ash Wednesday Service, noon Intercessory Prayer, 5:30 Ash Wednesday Service, 6:00
Feb. 17	Lackawanna/Lehigh Joint Presbyterian Gathering, 10:00
Feb. 18	Adult Ed., 9:00 Worship, 10:00
Feb. 21	Men's Lunch, noon Intercessory Prayer, 5:30 Lenten Bible Study @ SlateBelt, 6:00
Feb. 23	K-Group, 1:00
Feb. 25	Adult Ed., 9:00 Worship, 10:00 Youth Group, 2-4 @ SlateBelt
Feb. 26	Nexus Deadline
Feb. 28	Intercessory Prayer, 5:30 Lenten Bible Study, @ ESPC, 6:00

Living into Our Mission

Here are ways we have brought God's light to our community in recent months:

1. We have helped someone move into a new apartment, with furniture and home furnishings they needed.
2. We have provided meals for Family Promise.
3. We have supplied food to individuals and have taken food to the North Pantry.
4. We provided temporary room and board for people traveling through our area.
5. We supplied, blessed and delivered backpacks to kids in need.
6. We provided practice space for summer choir practices.

7. We baptized some babies!
8. We completed and are starting a new TOALC session.
9. We have had several Walk & Talks
10. We have given rides, meals and visits to our congregants.
11. We donated money to Ukraine.
12. We donated funds to Common Threads, Angel's Closet, Angel's & Dragonflies, 2nd Coming Thrift Shop and Timberwolf Pantry.
13. We contributed to One Great Hour of Sharing.
14. We contributed to the Peace & Global Witness Offering.
15. We contributed to Alice Visionary Project.
16. We provided space to the Lehigh Presbytery for some joint activities.
17. We support *Cares*. Once a week we have young adults with special needs come in and volunteer small chores around the church.
18. Some members volunteered to Ring the Bell for the Salvation Army during the Christmas season.
19. Sunday School kids made cards and cookies and delivered them to shut-ins for Christmas.
20. We donated money to the Earthquake Relief in Turkey.
21. We started a new task list for our church.
22. We celebrated Lenten ministry and meals with neighboring churches.
23. We had an Easter Egg hunt with other churches.
24. We had a Ramadan dinner here at ESPC.
25. We welcomed new members!
26. We had a yard sale and sent donations to 3 different causes.
27. We support Angel's Closet by being a drop-off location for bundle pickups.
28. We have supported Street to Feet.
29. We held a Bible study group.
30. We donated Thanksgiving food baskets to families in need.
31. We sent 36 boxes overseas to children for Operation Christmas Child.
32. We donated Christmas food baskets to families in need.
33. We helped three families have a Brighter Christmas.

O.C.C. Update

We received word from Samaritan's Purse that ALL our Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes were delivered to the Dominican Republic. Samaritan's Purse began delivering Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts to children in the island nation in 1999. Located in the Caribbean Sea, the Dominican Republic occupies the eastern side of Hispaniol - the island it shares with Haiti. It is known for its tourism, mining, and agriculture. More than 40 percent of Dominicans live in vulnerable conditions and are at risk of falling into poverty due to climate-related impacts and economic crises. Thank you again for your generous and continued support of this worthy mission project!

Artists-In-Residence Mission

The Church of the Mountain, a small but vibrant and creative congregation, wants to share their God-given talents. "We are blessed with poets, painters, writers, musicians, composers and songwriters in our congregation who will serve as mentors in the community for anyone, of any age, who is interested in learning more about these arts" says Reverend Sherry Blackman, pastor of the church. If interested in learning more, contact Rev. Blackman at 570-476-0345 or by email: pcom106@gmail.com or pick up more information in the lobby.

Church Elders

Sharon Laverdure	Sandra Rydell	Jim Hall
Debbie Prince	Phil Lawrence	Chris Neighbors
Carole Emery	Bobbie Long	

Nexus Staff

Pastor: Nicole Vogel
 Editor: Jen Carmella

Contributors: Lisa Swanson

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 Adult Ed. 9:00 Worship, 10:00 Communion Sunday	5	6 Pocono Interfaith Council, 9:00 a.m.	7 Intercessory Prayer, 5:30	8	9	10
11 Adult Ed. 9:00 Worship, 10:00 Session Mtg. Scripture Reasoning, 2:30	12	13 Women's Circle, 1:00	14 Ash Wednesday Services at noon and 6:00 pm Intercessory Prayer, 5:30	15	16	17 Lackawanna/ Lehigh Joint Presbyterian gathering, 10:00
18 Adult Ed. 9:00 Worship, 10:00	19	20	21 Men's Lunch, noon Intercessory Prayer, 5:30 Lenten Bible Study, 6:00	22	23 K-Group, 1:00	24
25 Adult Ed. 9:00 Worship, 10:00 Youth Group, 2-4	26 Nexus Deadline	27	28 Intercessory Prayer, 5:30 Lenten Bible Study, 6:00	29		