

THE NEXUS NOVEMBER 2022

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Nicki's News

Dear friends and members,

In a book I am reading, the author, Mark Tidsworth, notes a common understanding that we so easily forget. "Change is difficult, and resistance is inevitable." I am sure we all can agree that change happens at such a more rapid pace than ever before. This factor leads to increased anxiety, around even small changes. We can also agree that the landscape of the church and its role in culture is changing as well. Because we can't stop the changing landscapes around us, we look to the words of scriptures for how to handle all the changes we face daily and as we are facing in the changing church.

The scripture that helps most in times of change is the reminder from Paul's letter to other anxious Christians, Philippians 4:6 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Two key aspects about this to remember as we experience changes, both in our lives and in the church; Prayer and Gratitude. Since change is coming whether we like it or not, may we seek to turn our anxieties to God through prayer when they arise and express gratitude for all the blessings and even the many times Christ's peace has been shared with us in changes past.

In His Peace,
Pastor Nicki

Nexus Deadline

The Nexus deadline for the December issue is Monday, November 28th.



Pledge Sunday

Join us Sunday, November 6th for worship as we celebrate Pledge Sunday. Please make sure to bring your pledge cards in with you, or mail them ahead of time to the church office.

Nexus Sponsor

This month's issue is being sponsored by Frank Lanterman. There will soon be a new sign-up sheet for people interested in sponsoring a future Nexus issue. The cost is \$35.00.

5-7 Year Planning Commission

The next meetings of the 5-7 Year Planning Commission will be Mondays, November 14th and 28th at 4:15 p.m.

Men's Lunch

The Men's Lunch group will meet on Wednesday, November 9th in the Lounge. Please join is for soup and sandwiches and great conversation.

Shared Ministries Opportunities

Check out below for some fun ways to meet and get to know our neighbors this Advent season. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Pot Pie Lunch!

We have been invited to a free pot pie lunch at First Presbyterian Church in Stroudsburg on Sunday, November 6th at 11:30 a.m. It is a great opportunity to meet our fellow neighbors. Please see the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Advent Wreath Making!

On Saturday, November 19th, we are invited to the Christ Presbyterian of the Slate Belt to make Advent wreaths together. This will run from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Please see the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Advent Worship

Advent begins November 27th. This year, we will have a joint theme between four churches called "Journey in Faith and Trust". Each Sunday in Advent, we will have a pastor from one of the four churches lead worship. Each of the pastors will rejoin their home congregation for the final week of Advent.

Week 1 of Advent, we will be hosting Rev. Chuck Monts of the Pleasant Valley Presbyterian Church in Brodheadsville. Week 2 of Advent, we will be hosting Rev. Karen Kinney of the Christ Presbyterian Church of the Slate Belt. Week 3 of Advent, we will be hosting Rev. Beth Utley from the First Presbyterian Church of Stroudsburg. Week 4, Pastor Nicki will be back here.



Hope Fund

Our HOPE Fund is a fund we began in response to the needs of our community, that can help people struggling with financial constraints. This fund has helped many congregants, or any person identified as in need, pay for electric, heating, rent assistance, glasses, car repairs and more. As the cost of living is going up, we are seeing increased needs and use of this fund. These funds are now getting low. If you would like, you can donate to this fund at any time. Additionally, if you know someone in need, you can direct them to us and we will do what we can to assist them. Please note "Hope Fund" on your check memo line.

Celebrations:

Celebrating **Birthdays in November** are:

Chris Vogel, Lisa Finelli, Stacey Mattern,
Tim Swanson, Kathy Kauderer, Allan Erbe,
Sandy Gordon, Christy Pedersen, Donald Hopkins
and Linda Schaller.

Celebrating an **Anniversary in November** are:

Robert and Diane Huffman
David and Barbara Braithwaite
Greg and Lisa Menio

Peace & Global Witness Offering

Thank you to all those who supported the Peace & Global Witness Special Offering campaign this year. The total donated was \$1980.00. We have sent a check for \$495.00 to the Alice Visionary Foundation Project which was the 25% our church could use for mission.

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 members in need.

3. We have supplied food to individuals and have also taken lots of food to the North Timberwolf Pantry.

4. We have provided temporary room and board for people traveling through our area.

5. We supplied, blessed and delivered backpacks to kids in need in our area and donated more up north.

6. We provided practice space for a summer choir.

7. We baptized a baby, 3 children and their father!

8. We completed and are starting a new TOALC session.

9. We have had several Walk & Talks.

10. We have helped in giving rides, meals and visits to our congregants.

11. We have donated money to Ukraine.

12. We donated funds to Common Threads, Angels & Dragonflies, Angel's Closet, Meals On Wheels, 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 the Alice Visionary Project

16. We provided space to the Lehigh Presbytery for some of their activities

Calling All Youth

We are excited to announce that we are going to be joining with youth from several area Presbyterian Churches to come together for times of sharing and fellowship with one another. The November youth gathering will take place at Christ Presbyterian Church from 2:00-4:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 27th.

Inspirarity Dialogue

Inspirarity Dialogue- You have a chance to meet your neighbors of differing faiths through conversations with them. This dialogue time is one hour and each month a different topic is chosen for the next month's discussion. Each person is to bring their faith traditions or own personal beliefs take on the chosen topic. Currently we are still doing this remotely on Zoom, but the hope is to do it in person in the future.

Meeting ID: 811 4459 9578
Passcode: 621686

Next meeting is Sunday, November 13th at 7:00 p.m.

November Meetings & Events

Nov. 2nd – Walk & Talk, 1:00 pm

Nov. 4th – K-Group, 1:00 pm

Nov. 6th – Session meeting, following worship

Nov. 6th - Free Pot Pie lunch at 1st Pres., 11:30 m

Nov. 8th – Mission Committee meeting, 1:00 pm

Nov. 8th – Women's Circle group. 1:45 pm

Nov. 9th - Men's Lunch, noon

Nov. 12th – Stated Assembly meeting @ Johnsburg

Nov. 13th – Inspirarity Dialogues, 7:00 pm

Nov. 14th – 5-7 Year Planning Commission, 4:15

Nov. 19th – Advent Wreath making @ Christ Pres. of the Slate Belt, 10-noon

Nov. 20th – Congregational meeting, after worship

Nov. 20th – Annual Interfaith Prayer Service, 7:00 p.m. @ St. John's

Nov. 20th – Youth Gathering, 2-4

Nov. 24th - Thanksgiving Dy – Church closed

Nov. 25th – Church closed

Nov. 27th – First Sunday in Advent

Nov. 28th – 5-7 Year Planning Commission, 4:15

Looking ahead...

Sonya Cole is looking to sign people up to ring the Salvation Army bell at the Stroud Mall Shoprite. If you are available on December 10th, please let her know.

Adult Education Books Available

There are some **free** books available on the table in the Narthex. These are provided by the Adult Education Class, led by Tim Swanson. Here is some information about the new free booklets.

“Resting in His Shadow”

When the day is done, God wants you to rest in His shadow. This booklet contains devotions to close the day with comforting prayers, timely quotes and timeless biblical truths. They will remind you that God is still in charge and you are protected.

“Know Your Bible”

All 66 books of the bible are explained and applied in this booklet. Keep this booklet by your bible.

“199 Promises of God”

The Bible is packed with promises for everyday life, and dozens of these important reminders are included in this booklet.

“Your Identity in Christ”

This excellent booklet clearly reminds us that with God we are accepted, we are secure, and we are significant. God has equipped you with everything you need to ward off the attack of Satan.

“The Case for Christ Answer Booklet”

This booklet by Lee Strobel provides answers to 20 of the most asked questions about the Christian faith. Why believe Jesus is the Son of God? How can we know he rose from the dead? Is there historical evidence to support the Bible? These questions and 17 others are discussed here.

Operation Christmas Child

Lisa and the kids will be filling the shoeboxes during Sunday School on Sunday, November 6th. Please have all your donations in before that date. Thank you!

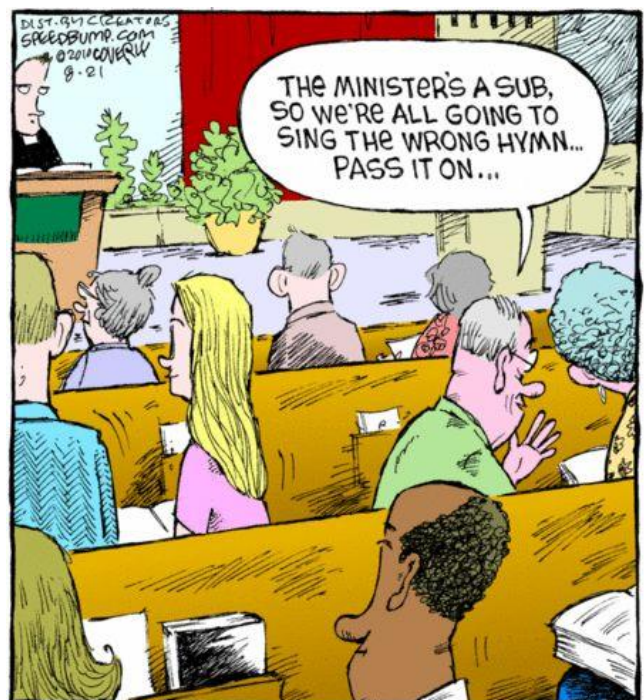
Interfaith Prayer Service

The annual Interfaith Prayer Service, sponsored and led by Monroe County Faith Leaders, will be hosted by St. John's Lutheran Church at 9 Ninth St Stroudsburg Pa at 7pm on November 20th. Pastor Nicki will be assisting in the leading of this annual Interfaith Prayer Service which includes prayers, scriptures and more from varying faith traditions.

Share Your Faith

In an effort to share our story, spread faith, and reach out to our community and beyond, we are asking you to share your faith stories. It is our hope to compile the many inspiring stories of faith we all have, into one work to be published and sold as a fundraiser for our church ministries and building needs. We welcome all stories of faith in any amount you'd like to share. You may bring the stories into church in print form, or you may e-mail them to Amanda Denny at adenny@evenlink.com (or to the church if you think that's better - I just don't want to create unnecessary additional work for anyone else). We ask that all stories be submitted by the end of the year so we can move forward with publication in 2023.

Humor Corner



From Chris Vogel

Many of you asked if you could get a copy of Chris Vogel's stewardship minute for mission from Sunday October 30th. As such we have included it in this month's Nexus.

Good Morning Everyone....

Being a trained accountant with a CPA certification, an MBA, and almost 15 years of nonprofit accounting experience and a history of helping churches with their financials, as well as being the heir apparent to the treasury position within the Presbytery, it would seem that I would make a great spokesperson for stewardship.

When Judy asked me to speak, I began reflecting on the message I wanted to deliver, there's so many angles you can take on stewardship, in the nonprofit world, not only is stewardship vital to the survival of your mission, it's also God's call for each one of us. As I was discerning what God wanted me to say, I began to struggle with deep turmoil. I became convicted and felt I had to do the right thing.

I am up here today, in front of this amazing congregation, and the folks who are watching at home to confess, that I am a terrible spokesperson for stewardship. You may even go as far as to say that I'm a hypocrite.

See, when Nicole became your pastor, I was a regular giver to the church I consider my home. I was also, and still am, a generous giver of charitable causes that I believe in around the world. I considered this as sufficient to meet my obligation to our call as Christians to being good stewards of the church.

However, when covid hit, things changed. We had a new public health emergency, which was overriding all other public health emergencies that we had and still have. We, as a society, became consumed with fear, and I could see that fear changing into anger, hatred, and indifference toward our fellow man. The most vulnerable amongst us was backburnered and left fending for themselves.

I'm so proud of this church, because we kept the doors opened to these folks. We figured out how we can help addicts, in dire need of daily support and do it safely, without disruption. We knew the dangers of covid, it was a matter of life or death, but we didn't lose sight of the fact that these folks' situations were a matter of life and death as well. This was despite much self-doubt (are we really doing the right thing?), and incredible societal pressure that we ignore these people and focus exclusively on the virus like so many others were doing.

I'm just being honest here, I wasn't angry my home church closed down for AA and NA and all other vital services our communities need, what got me was the coldness and indifference towards these people they showed as they did. What got me was there was no regret, but they bragged about it, from the words of the pastors there, there wasn't even any consideration, as if abiding by the pressures the world is putting on you was the highest virtue and should be done regardless of the societal cost. And I just want to be clear, I'm not saying that I'm so sure this is 100% the reality of the situation, it was my perception and my feelings at the time.

Because of this, I ended my giving and my relationship with my home church. And I decided to come up with my own plan. I said, I'll take that money and give it to the communities that need it. This was my plan, not God's plan. And guess what happened? Life.

As inflation hit, I found myself having less cash to give. I was one of two people in my department who didn't get a market adjustment, by the time the raises got to me, our budgets were getting stretched and they put the kibosh on it. I'm sure everybody knows what it feels like to not get invited to the party. I ran the numbers for my boss to let him know, that regardless of what the news is telling us CPI is, with my family's household expenses, I am taking a 16% pay cut, as that's how much my expenses increased. Not to mention the performance of the stock market that took my savings down to 1/2 of what it was. Despite giving 10% of my income to my 401K, it continues to drop. I'm sure many are feeling this pinch.

I'm not saying this for pity, I'm doing very well still, as is my family. I've been in much more dire straits so I know, if things are getting this tight for us, imagine what others are going through. This wasn't the first time that things got unexpectedly tighter for my family. But I regret to inform you that I responded sinfully. Bunkering down and trying to rebuild to where I was.

What I now realize, after reflection for this talk for you today, was that my plan failed. Life happened. When I was in a position where my finances and salary could barely support our living situation, we still stuck to God's plan and gave generously to the church. Pastor Nicki always stuck with God's plan and always gave regularly and generously to the church despite being in the exact same boat that I'm in. That's why she's the pastor and I'm the cold businessman. See, Nicki and I were really poor at one point in our lives, but we still gave faithfully out of what little we had, and the result was never close to financial ruin, it was spiritual, emotional growth and stability as we learned that God's plan is always the better plan. How am I better than the church that I'm criticizing now? Like them, I succumbed to the social pressures of the world and neglected my brothers and sisters in need just like they did. I thought I was transcending the times, not succumbing to the pressures of the world, as Pastor Nicki has been preaching to us since she started her call. What I didn't hear though from her messages was that our plans never work out, we need to discern and stick with God's plan.

God sent an unwitting messenger to me, Judy Schreck, who challenged me to speak today, and this led me to look into my complacent heart and to recognize a huge part of me that I lost. I stand here in front of you today and I confess openly and ask God for forgiveness and your grace as Christians to forgive me for my hypocrisy. My part of that is repenting and turning away from my sinful plan and turning back to God's plan. For the first time, starting now, I am pledging to give to this amazing church to further our mission.

One last thing, I know we Christians love when a prodigal son returns home, but I'm deserving of no such treatment. My confession here isn't about me. I'm just a deeply flawed Christian, trying to figure things out. What I hope comes out of this, is that maybe one other person looks into their own heart and asks "Am I following God's plan, or am I following my own?" I'm not talking about giving, I mean in every aspect of your life. Ask yourself, "Am I following God's plan?" I truly believe that when you do that with your authentic heart and discern what it is God is calling on you to do, nothing short of a miracle happens. In my mind, this is the indisputable proof of God's existence and His love for us, His deeply flawed children. Praise God. Thank you.

Church Elders

Sharon Laverdure	Rick Sanker	Ellie Buff
Sandra Rydell	Judy Schreck	Jim Hall
Phil Lawrence	Debbie Prince	Lisa Swanson

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Jen Carmella	Secretary
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Sami Carmella	Nursery Attd.
Keith Karkut	Tech./Sexton

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November 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Adult Ed. Class, 9:00 every Sunday		1	2 Walk & Talk, 1:00 p.m.	3	4 K-Group, 1:00	5
6 Worship, 10:00 PLEDGE SUNDAY Communion Session Mtg., 11:00 Pot Pie Lunch @ 1 st Pres., 11:30	7	8 Mission Committee meeting, 1:00 p.m. Women's Circle, 1:45 p.m.	9 Men's Lunch, noon	10	11	12 Lehigh Presbytery Gathering, 9:00 am
13 Worship, 10:00 Inspararity Dialogues, 7:00 pm	14 5-7 Year Planning Commission, 4:15 pm	15	16	17	18	19 Advent Wreath Making @ Christ Presbyterian of Slate Belt, 10:00 am
20 Worship, 10:00 Congregational Mtg, following worship Interfaith Prayer Service, 7:00 pm @ St. John's	21	22	23	24 Happy Thanksgiving! Church Closed	25 Church Closed	26
27 1st Sunday in Advent Worship, 10:00 Youth Gathering, 2-4 at Christ Presbyterian	28 5-7 Year Planning Commission, 4:15 pm Nexus deadline	29	30			