



The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
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PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

“Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

Just because you're grown up doesn't mean you won't feel fear from time to time. While I'm no longer afraid of the dark like I was as a child, life can still bring moments of uncertainty, anxiety, and fear.. In such times, Isaiah 41 helps me gain perspective.

“Do not be afraid, for I am with you,” God says through the prophet.

God is always with us. God was present with Israel in the Old Testament as they faced giants, lions, and city walls. God was there when Joseph was thrown into a pit by his brothers, abandoned, and sold into slavery. God was with the Hebrew people in their long journey through the wilderness, and when David faced the giant Goliath.

God is always by our side. Jesus embodies this presence, having been laid in a manger, dying on the cross, and rising from the grave. We don't have to live in fear because God is with us. We don't need to feel discouraged, for the God who is with us is our God. God is the one who spoke, and galaxies came into being; the one who parts seas and shuts the mouths of lions. God is with us. God is our God.

The next time you feel afraid, remember that you are not alone. God is with you to strengthen you and help you. God will hold you up with God's victorious right hand.

May it be so!
Pastor David

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VALENTINE'S CELEBRATION WITH HERITAGE VILLAGE



Thank you to Beth Clark and Shirley Hafford for all their work on the Valentine's Party held at Heritage Village on Sunday, February 9. Pizza and desserts were enjoyed, as well as games with fun prizes. Thank you also to everyone who contributed the sweets that were served. Many tables in the common room at the apartment building were filled with residents and church members. The end result was the request that such events be held more often.

GUEST PREACHER

On Sunday, February 16, Jalen Rashad Baker will be the guest preacher at the 10:30am service of worship. Jalen is a PhD Student at Princeton Theological Seminary, in the Department of History and Ecumenics, with a concentration in Religion in the Americas. His research interests include Black American religious history, Evangelicalism in America, and Black political and theological perspectives and ideologies. Jalen is interested in studying the origins of Black Evangelicalism in America and is particularly interested in the last decade of the antebellum period. Jalen holds a BA in sociology from Bates College and received his Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary.

TRAINING FOR ELDERS AND DEACONS

A one-hour training session for elders and deacons will be held following worship on Sunday, February 23. If you are serving on session or the Board of Deacons please plan to attend.

SESSION RESTRUCTURING

In response to the results and the recent mission study and the input received in the small group meetings, the session has voted to make some adjustments to its committee structure. These committees better fit the ministries articulated in the study and in the mission/vision/values statements.

Effective with the February 19 session meeting, standing committees will now be:

- Christian Education
- Communications
- Community Care
- Property & Finance
- Worship

Once chairpeople have been designated, you may be asked to serve on one of these committees. Think about your particular gifts and interests and say "yes" when asked to serve, or let the Clerk of Session, Carol Belles, know of your desire to serve and she will put you in contact with the appropriate chairperson.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION GROUP

The Truth and Reconciliation Group will host an afternoon movie event at 1:00pm on Saturday, February 22nd in Fellowship Hall. We will be watching the movie "Origin" about a writer who is working on a book about systems of oppression. It is adapted from Isabel Wilkerson's best-selling book, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*.

Following the movie will be a time for discussion. All are welcome. Please see a member of the group if you have questions.

ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS

At the annual meeting of the congregation on January 26, the following people were elected:

Elders:

Beth Clark
Kate Moore
Andy Pratt

Deacons:

Sydney Ryon
Sandra Thomas
Kathy Buck (2 year unexpired term)
Emma Moore (1 year unexpired term)

Thank you to these servants of God who have answered the call to serve.

LENT



A **Lenten Study** will be held on Thursdays at 7pm via Zoom, starting on March 6. The book being used is "Forgiveness" by Marjory Thompson. If you are interested in participating, please sign up on the sheet in the fellowship hall or let Mark Thomas know by Sunday, February 16, so enough books can be ordered.

SNOW!

Fortunately, this year has not been too bad. However, we still have a number of weeks of winter. That leaves the potential for lots of snow on the way! Cleanup usually happens when Carl Belles and Bill Mansmann man the snow blower and snow shovels. We can always use some help and we have snow shovels, ice melt and a terrific snow blower available for use. If you are able to lend a hand, please speak with Bill Mansmann or call him at 609-651-1321.



2025 PER CAPITA FEE

The Presbytery set the Per Capita fee for 2025 at \$40.00 per member. These funds support the work of the greater church. At the end of 2024, Slackwood had 88 members on the roll so the church's total per capita will be over \$3,500. It is important that each member of our church participate and contribute the Per Capita Fee. Any shortfall in receiving the Per Capita fee is paid from the general funds of the church that reduces funds available for other needs of the church.

PROPERTY AND FINANCE

The first major project for the year, installing a solar array on the roof of the CE wing, is about to begin. The contractor has informed us that they intend to begin the installation at the end of February or early March. Looking forward to having this project completed.

The next meeting of the committee will take place following worship on Sunday March 9, 2025. If you would like to be part of the committee speak with Bill Mansmann!

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee is preparing for the season of Lent; a time to focus on Jesus and think about what it means to be a follower of Christ. On March 5, between 4-6:30pm, we will observe Ash Wednesday in our sanctuary. There will be five self-guided areas of reflection for those in attendance to spend time considering. The imposition of ashes and a blessing will be given by the Reverend David Bowman at station six. All are welcome.



Plans for Holy Week are being finalized. Slackwood will host the Maundy Thursday joint service this year with the other Presbyterian churches of Lawrence Township. Since we do not hold a Good Friday service at Slackwood, information will be shared about other local services as it becomes available. On Easter Sunday, there will be an early morning service in the garden and the traditional Sunday service in the sanctuary at 10:30.

Please see a member of the Worship Committee if you have questions or are interested in joining the committee.

THANKS

Marilyn Stebbins sends her thanks to everyone who remembered her 90th birthday this year. Every person who attended her party, every card she received, every prayer said meant more to her than words can express. Her Slackwood Church family continues to be an important part of her life.

Please check our calendar online for upcoming meetings and events:
<http://www.slackwoodchurch.org/event-calendar.html>