The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
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PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

What the Lord requires of us: To *Do Justice*, to *Love Kindness* and to *Walk Humbly* with our God. Micah 6:8

February 18th, Ash Wednesday, marks the beginning of the season of Lent. During Lent, we are invited to pause, reflect, and realign our hearts with God's calling. The words of the prophet Micah echo powerfully in this time: "What does the Lord require of us? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God."

Lent really is a journey—a chance to slow down and take a good look at our lives. It's a season for asking ourselves how we can live out Micah's challenge: justice, kindness, and humility. Justice means opening our eyes and hearts beyond our own needs, reaching out to help others, and making sure everyone gets a fair chance. It's about choosing to care about what's right, even when it's not easy or convenient. Kindness is all about those little moments—smiling at someone, listening when a friend needs to talk, or just being patient when things get hectic. Even the smallest acts can make a big difference in someone's day.

And then there's humility, which keeps us grounded. It's remembering that we don't have all the answers and that we need God's help and grace every step of the way. Humility helps us stay open to learning and growing, and reminds us that we're all in this together. As we move through Lent, may we keep these three things in mind and let them shape how we treat others and how we walk with God.

May this Lent be a season where we open our hearts to transformation, allowing God to shape us into people who reflect Christ's justice, kindness, and humility in all we do.

Blessings on your Lenten journey.

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

LENTEN STUDY

Join us Thursdays at 7 pm, Feb. 19 through March 26 via Zoom for our Lenten Study using “Meeting Jesus on the Road” by Cynthia Campbell and Christine Coy Fohr. In this study, we will be invited to journey alongside Christ through the Gospel stories that define his earthly path. Sign up in Fellowship Hall or contact Pastor David to participate; books will be provided.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

At its annual meeting on January 25, the congregation of the church elected the following people to offices:

Elders: Ginger Baker, Eric Johansen and Mark Thomas
Deacons: Margie Buck, Jack Gortatowski and Emma Moore
Members of the 2026 nominating committee: Penny Baumann, Susan Gibbs and Bill Mansmann.

Thank you to all for responding to this call to service. New officers will be ordained and installed during the 10:30 a.m. service of worship on Sunday, February 1.

Thank you also to officers who have completed their terms of service: Elders Penny Baumann and Andrea Moore and Deacons Maureen Rickman and Jean Washington. These members have faithfully served God and the church as officers for six years. We look forward to their continued participation in the ministries of Slackwood Church.

SESSION NEWS

At its January 21 meeting, the church session adopted a church growth plan. After a church growth team is appointed, you will see and hear of ways members can connect with neighbors and friends and invite them to worship and church activities.

2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Sets of offering envelopes have been distributed for those who requested a set, and a few remain in the rear of the sanctuary. Be sure to pick yours up even if you do not use them on a regular basis. If you did not receive a set and would like one, contact Bill Mansmann at 609-651-1321 and he will be glad to furnish you with a set of offering envelopes. Having a set of envelopes facilitates the creation of a statement for your record of giving.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee’s goal continues to be to help facilitate meaningful worship at Slackwood. This winter’s weather has been challenging, but we continue to hold services online at 10:30 when we can’t be together in-person. Should we have another Sunday storm, we hope you will consider joining us on Zoom. All you need to do is click the link in the weekly announcements and put your mic on mute.

The committee is aware that there are some sound issues with the new system. We are working hard to address them and make changes so that the sound is consistent throughout the service especially during the musical portions. We appreciate your patience.

The season of Lent is not far off and the committee is preparing. On Wednesday, February 18, the sanctuary will be open from 3:30pm-6:30pm for those wishing to participate in our Ash Wednesday reflective stations. Stations are set up around the exterior of the sanctuary and are self-guided. Take as much or as little time as you wish, or just stop in for the imposition of ashes from Pastor Bowman.

Throughout the season, you will see additional candles on the dais. These candles will be a visual symbol representing the journey of Christ toward crucifixion. One will be extinguished each week to represent the growing darkness as Jesus; *The Light of the World* approaches the cross. These candles will be relit on Easter signifying his Resurrection.

There will be a Maundy Thursday service hosted by The Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville at 7:30pm this year. Our choir will not formally participate in the joint choir. If, however, you are interested in participating individually, please reach out to Shelley for more information.

Although Slackwood will not have a Good Friday service, there are opportunities for you to worship at other local churches that day.

The Worship Committee will meet next on February, 22 after worship and a brief time of fellowship. All are welcome to attend.

Kate Moore

COMMUNITY CARE

Thanks to all who donated supplies and came out to help on our MLK day of service. We successfully filled 83 various hygiene kits for Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, decorated bags, and included notes for the adults and children receiving the kits.

We are looking forward to our next event on February 8th. We will be bringing a pasta lunch to our friends next door at Heritage Village. We will have music, bingo and prizes! All are welcome!

SNOW! SNOW! SNOW!

This is the time of the year to move snow around when it arrives. We have snow shovels, ice melt and a terrific snow blower available for use. Generally, we are covered, but help is always welcomed at the church. If you are able to lend a hand, please speak with Bill Mansmann or call him at 609-651-1321.

2026 PER CAPITA FEE

The Presbytery set the Per Capita fee for 2026 at $42.00 per member. These funds support the work of the greater church. 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 and that reduces funds available for other needs of the church.

TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND RECONCILIATION GROUP

The Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Group meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7pm on Zoom. The link to join can be found in the email for the weekly announcements.

In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a foundational belief is the modern commitment to social justice and advocacy for the marginalized.

'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Matthew 25:40

In an increasingly unsettling time, the TJ, and R group provides a safe space for those in attendance to be in the moment and feel. There is no pressure to talk or answer questions and you are invited to just come and listen. We focus on learning about injustices and taking action so that we may be the light.

During our meetings, we check-in and open the floor to anyone who wishes to share. We finalize plans for upcoming events and begin planning for events that will happen later in the calendar year. Typically, we read two books and organize two movie showings a year. After each event, there is an opportunity for discussion. We participate on a voluntary basis in the Vote Forward campaign and hold a candlelight service for World Human Rights Day on December 10.

The next meeting will be held on February 12th. All are welcome to attend. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), many theological perspectives emphasize Jesus as a political figure whose life and teachings were a direct challenge to the oppressive systems of his time. This belief is foundational to the denomination's modern commitment to social justice and advocacy for the marginalized.

Kate Moore

PROPERTY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Committee meets following worship on the second Sunday of each month in the church library. If you would like to join us as we consider items for the maintenance of the church grounds, let Bill Mansmann or Carl Belles know of your interest. Also, if you have any ideas or concerns, please let Bill or Carl know of them.