The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
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Rev. David Bowman, Pastor
Shelley Zuckerman, Director of Music
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October 2025

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

During our vacation earlier this summer with our daughter and her family, I spent a lot of time interacting with Calloway, our 3-year-old grandson. One afternoon, while we were putting together a puzzle, one of the pieces got bent somehow. Filled with exasperation, Calloway said, "What are we gonna do, Bopa, (his name for me), what ARE we gonna do?"

So often, in the church, we look at the world around us, consider the small size of our congregation, and like Calloway, wonder, "What are we going to do?" For Calloway, the answer was simple—unbend the puzzle piece. But what about for us?

I believe that within our faith community, God has provided us with everything we need to grow and succeed in our mission and ministry – God has given us each other… talented, resourceful, faithful people. Here's the catch… We each need to do our part.

We gather every Sunday to worship the God who has blessed us and called us God's beloved. (Sunday worship is vital!) From that gathering, we find answers to "What are we going to do?": Invite a neighbor, coworker, friend, or family member to join you at a church event or worship; find ways to advocate for the needs of a marginalized group; send a note or

text to someone expressing gratitude; call a homebound friend ; look for opportunities to volunteer with an organization making a difference in our community; remind someone they are loved; find ways to serve within the church community; participate in an opportunity to nurture your faith…

So, what are YOU going to do?

Blessings,
David

Contact information:
Email: dfbsbv@gmail.com
Cell: 732.547.3480

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

BIBLE STUDY

We invite you to join us on the first and third Thursdays of every month at 7pm via zoom for Bible Study. No prior knowledge is necessary! For our study, we use the passages that will be read in worship the following Sunday. If you'd like to join us, contact Pastor David. During Advent, we will have a special weekly Study – stay tuned for this year's book.

COMMUNITY CARE

Community care is having our annual Trunk or Treat on Saturday October 18 from 3 to 5pm in the church parking lot. Rain date is planned for October 25th. We are looking for volunteers to decorate their trunk and join in the fun. If you would like to volunteer please email Shirley Hafford at hafffrog@yahoo.com. All volunteers should arrive by 2 or 2:30 to ensure we are all set up and ready at 3pm.

NEW MEMBER

At its meeting on September 17, the session received Fred Romanowsky into church membership. Father of Amy Valentino, Fred was for many years, a member of the Covenant Presbyterian Church in Trenton. Welcome, Fred!

UPDATE ON TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE

As we anxiously await the beginning of the work to upgrade the sanctuary sound system and the livestreaming equipment, members and friends continue to donate funds to cover the cost of the upgrade. As of the writing of this article, $25,526.67 has been raised. Thank you to everyone who has donated. You may continue your contributions by using the change jar in fellowship hall, using one of the envelopes in the pew racks, or sending a check made out to Slackwood Church with "technology upgrade" on the memo line.

FALL CLEAN-UP DAY – OCTOBER 25, 2025

A clean-up day has been scheduled for Saturday October 25, beginning at 9:30 am. By then most of the leaves will have fallen to give us plenty of work to do! In addition to the leaves, we can clear the brush along the driveway, edge the front sidewalk, empty gutters on the sheds or trim low hanging branches on trees around the property. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to join in for an hour or two for some work, fun and fellowship. Hope to see you there.
Throughout the summer many jobs were completed: Thanks to those who cut the grass and keep the weeds at bay all summer – good work by all!

PANCAKE BREAKFAST RETURNS

The monthly Pancake Breakfast will return to activity on Friday, October 17, at 8:30am! The event has not been held since the time of COVID. Once again, we will gather on the 3rd Friday of the month to enjoy breakfast and fellowship together. After the meal it will be time to complete a job or two around the church. So, if you are available please let Bill Mansmann – 609-651-1321 – know that you will attend.

PROPERTY & FINANCE

We are pleased to announce that the parking lot and driveway have been completed! Thanks to a gift from Dolly Ettenger, we were able to have this needed work done!

The committee meets on the 2nd Sunday of the month following worship. If you would like to suggest items for the committee to consider or attend the meeting, all are welcome!

TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND RECONCILIATION

The Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation group usually meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 on Zoom and gathers for special events throughout the year.

We will be hosting a discussion on The New York Times Bestseller American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins this winter. This is a fictional novel "about Lydia Quixano Pérez and her eight-year-old son, Luca, who are forced to flee Acapulco, Mexico, after a ruthless drug cartel massacres their entire family." All are welcome to participate. If you are interested in a copy of the book, please reach out to Kate Moore or sign-up in Fellowship Hall by November 9th.

On Wednesday, December 10, The Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Group will be observing World Human Rights Day. More information will be shared in the coming weeks about this event.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, November 13. All are welcome to attend.

Kate Moore

WORSHIP

On Sunday, October 5th, we celebrated World Communion Sunday with our brothers and sisters from the Grace congregation. It was nice to see the pews filled with members from both congregations. After the service, many stayed to enjoy delicious foods at our potluck luncheon.

On October 11th, the Worship Committee held a Blessing of the Pets service outdoors under the tent at 11:00am. Pastor Bowman blessed the animals loved by those in attendance.

Members, family members, and friends who have died this past year will be remembered on All Saints Sunday, November 2nd during the 10:30am service of worship. Please reach out to Kate Moore or Pastor Bowman with names of loved ones to be remembered, or place the names on the sheet in Fellowship Hall.

If you are interested in participating in our worship service as a liturgist, usher, or choir member, please let Carol Belles, Kate Moore, or Shelley Zuckerman know and we will happily help you make that happen.

The Worship Committee usually meets after worship on the 4th Sunday of the month in the sanctuary. Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, October 26th following worship. All are welcome to attend.

Kate Moore

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

An intergenerational group activity is scheduled for November 2nd at 9:15 am in Fellowship Hall. The intergenerational activity will be replacing Messy Church this year. The Christian Ed committee will coordinate the activity for the first meeting. The goal is to have the other committee take turns leading the remaining scheduled intergenerational meetings. Since the Adult Forum has been studying parables, the suggested idea for the first meeting is to have the youth and adults participate in the study of one of the parables (i.e., The Parable of the Good Samaritan).

The formal Sunday School lessons for Middle School and High School Youth will begin on November 9th. The schedule for the Sunday School Program was distributed at the kick-off meeting in September. The curriculum that will be used for middle school will be a combination of Follow Me: Make Disciples and Bible Study Guide and Workbook for Beginners. The high school youth will continue using the book “What Do I Believe About What I Believe?”

The Adult Forum meets via Zoom on Sunday mornings at 9 am. The group is currently studying John MacArthur’s book on parables. All are welcome to join. The Adult Forum link is provided in the Slackwood Church announcements sent via email each Saturday.

Care packages and cards will be sent this month to our young people that are currently enrolled in college or are out in the working world as a reminder that they are thought of by their church family.

Mark Thomas (Co-chair)

THANK YOU

Proverbs 22:6
"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."
I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to my Slackwood church community for being Emma’s village. Your love, patience, and encouragement have been so positively impactful on her and our family. The safe space Slackwood has created has allowed Emma to ask questions and deepen her relationship with God. Her connections with you have given her a sense of belonging to a faith community where she is surrounded by examples of integrity, compassion, and service. Thank you for helping to lay a strong foundation that I believe will help her navigate difficult times, build resilience, foster her faith, and help her be a light in this world.

In gratitude,

Kate Moore

IN SYMPATHY

Sadness impacted our Slackwood family recently with the death of Marilyn Stebbins on September 24th, after 90 years of faithful discipleship and devoted contributions to our church life. Marilyn will always be remembered for her big smile, caring and generous ways, joyful energy, positive and inspirational story-telling, and willingness to serve our church and community over the years. She served Slackwood as an elder, a deacon, a choir member, a liturgist, a Sunday school teacher, Moderator of Presbyterian Women of New Brunswick Presbytery, as well as part of many committees. She was a devoted wife to her late husband, Richard, a loving mother to Shelley and Scott, and a proud grandmother. We will all miss her tremendously.. A memorial service is being planned for a later date to celebrate Marilyn’s life and recognize her many contributions to our church life.