The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
2020 Brunswick Avenue
Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648-4606
Office: (609) 392-3258

Rev. David Bowman, Pastor
Shelley Zuckerman, Director of Music
Website: www.slackwoodchurch.org

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Pastor's Pondering

Some seasons leave us deeply tired—not simply in body, but in heart and spirit. We may be carrying our own disappointment, illness, grief, or uncertainty. At the same time, we hurt for loved ones facing struggles we can't fix. Then we look at the world around us and see conflict, suffering, and fear. It can all feel like too much.

I have had days when I sat quietly in prayer and couldn't find the right words. I wanted answers, but what I needed most was simply to remember that I was not alone. In those moments, these words anchored me: "Come to me, all who labor and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Jesus doesn't shame us for being weary. He invites us to come close. His rest doesn't always mean that the circumstances immediately change. Sometimes it comes as strength for the next step, peace for the next hour, or the quiet assurance that he is carrying what we cannot.

If you are tired today, be gentle with yourself. You don't have to solve everything at once. Tell God honestly where it hurts. Let someone you trust walk beside you. Accept the meal, the phone call, the prayer, or the helping hand. And when you have a little strength to spare, offer that same kindness to someone else. We were never meant to carry life's burdens alone.

Whatever you or your loved ones are facing, please remember God sees you, God loves you, and God remains near. The darkness of this world does not have the final word. Christ does. May His presence give you courage for today, rest for your weary soul, and hope for tomorrow.

May it be so,

David

Contact info: *dfbsbv@gmail.com*
732.547.3480

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

FALL CLEAN-UP DAY – OCTOBER 24, 2026

A clean-up day has been scheduled for Saturday October 24, beginning at 8:30 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 exit driveway, edge the front sidewalk, clean out weeds in the playground 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 kept the weeds at bay all summer – good work by all!

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The monthly "Pancake Breakfast" met on Friday, October 16. There were ten people able to attend this month. The November "Breakfast" will be held on Friday November 20, 2026, again beginning at 8:30 am. 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.

ADVENT STUDY: *AWAITING THE ALREADY*

Join us as we journey through Advent using Magrey R. deVega's book, *Awaiting the Already: An Advent Journey Through the Gospels*.

Study Details

- **When:** Thursdays at 7:00 p.m., December 3, 10, 17
- **Book:** A copy will be provided to participants
- **Sign up:** Sign up on the sheet in Fellowship Hall
- **Questions:** Contact Pastor David

We hope you will join us as we prepare our hearts for Christmas.

MONTHLY SOCIAL

Plans are underway for a monthly after-worship social to be held on the first Sunday of each month. The first gathering will be December 6, when those attending will brainstorm ideas, topics, and activities for future get-togethers. If this sounds like something you might enjoy, please plan to stay after worship on December 6 and help shape this new program. Bring your ideas - we hope to see you there. For questions, contact Carol Belles or Madalyn Sailors.

PROPERTY & FINANCE

The committee continues to properly maintain the building and grounds around the church. If you have a concern, let Bill Mansmann or Carl Belles know so the concern can be addressed.

The committee now meets on a rotating basis, between meeting at the church after worship (odd numbered months) or by Zoom (even numbered months). In-person meetings will take place on the

2nd Sunday of the month following worship. The Zoom meetings will take place at 7:00 on Monday, following the 2nd Sunday of the month. If you would like to suggest items for the committee to consider, or attend the meeting, contact Bill or Carl, all are welcome!

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY – ARM IN ARM

Have you ever felt inspired after stepping outside of your comfort zone? On a recent Saturday, eight of us loaded into two cars and headed to Hudson Street in Trenton to volunteer at Arm in Arm. This service opportunity had been in the works for months and I was both nervous and excited that the day had finally arrived.

I've always had anxiety when trying something for the first time, so I wasn't surprised when my nerves were kicking in that morning. I didn't know what to expect. But surrounded by members of my Slackwood family, and armed with a desire to be helpful in the community, I walked through the doors and got to work.

The facility on Hudson Street is divided into three basic parts; the intake lobby, the "store", and the storage area. After receiving some training, we began preparing for our shift, manning different stations and stocking the week's available produce. The doors opened about a half an hour after we arrived and we began welcoming clients in to shop for their groceries. Shelf stable items, eggs, cheese, butter, and meat, were ready for distribution. Arm in Arm usually operates the store at this location on Mondays, Wednesdays, and the third Saturday of the month. Our visit was a trial "first" Saturday of the month and fifty clients had registered to shop.

Everything ran like a well-oiled machine and by the time our shift ended, we had met and exceeded our goal; serving sixty-seven of our neighbors in need! We restocked, cleaned up, and commemorated the day with a group picture. As we walked out a bit tired after our shift, I couldn't help but feel fulfilled by the experience. Instead of anxiety, I felt a sense of belonging and pride that we had found another way to reach out to our community and extend a hand of support and share our heart of service.

If you've thought about getting involved, but feel a little hesitant, I would encourage you to take the first step and sign up. Slackwood is scheduled to help from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm on the first Saturday of each month. I am already looking forward to going back.

Arm in Arm, originally called The Crisis Ministry, has been helping people since 1980. "Today 24 staff members and hundreds of volunteers welcome more than 6,000 families to our food pantries, work with 300-500 at-risk families to prevent or end homelessness, and driver's license restoration." -Arm in Arm website

STEWARDSHIP

This year's Stewardship campaign is up and running. Our theme is "Because We Believe…" and is focused on investing in the church we love and the future we want to see. We give of our time, talents, and treasures because God has given us something worth sharing.

Because we believe, we give. Because we believe, we welcome. Because we believe, our faith makes a difference. Because we believe, there is a place for our gifts.

Some give money.
Some give time.
Some sing.
Some teach.
Some visit.
Some cook.
Some serve on committees.
Some welcome people at the door.
Some pray.
Some bring a friend.
Some quietly make sure someone else is okay.

Every gift matters. Every person matters. Everyone has a part to play.

This Stewardship season, please prayerfully consider how you can share your time, talents, and treasures to help Slackwood continue God's work in our community.

Kate Moore

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE EVERYONE HAS A PLACE…WE WELCOME

"Welcome one another therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you. Why? For the glory of God." - Romans 15:7

Recently, a few familiar faces shared their thoughts on the idea of Slackwood being a welcoming church. Their reflections were heartfelt, touching, and made me smile. I am proud to be a member of the Slackwood Presbyterian Church community and to know that we are in fact… "Embracing God, Extending Welcome, and Celebrating All." The following quotes were shared during the worship service on October 11th.

> "One Sunday I was confronted by several different people asking me to sing in the choir and to be on a committee. I wasn't even a member yet, but I was invited to be on a committee and asked for my input. You made me feel welcome. You made me feel a part of the congregation." -Margie Buck
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> "Everything that we continue to do out in the community is why I come back. So you all were welcoming to me and we continue to welcome others in and out of this space and that's a beautiful thing to do." -Walter De Gunya

"This church was the one that was meeting the soonest, so we said 'ok we'll go here.' And we never went to any of the others. There was no purpose in moving on. We found a home and a place and a spirituality and a congregation and a theology that just made us feel really warm and welcome and wanted." -David Galiardo and Michael Vallio

"I can truly say at this place it doesn't seem like just another bill. It's not a burden. It's not an obligation. We give freely because we like what goes on here. We enjoy the services; we enjoy what this community does in terms of the outreach that we do." -Eric Johansen

Kate Moore

TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND RECONCILIATION

The Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Group continues to gain momentum and support. We usually meet virtually on the second Thursday of the month at 7 pm. A link to the meeting appears in the announcements the Saturday before the meeting. All are welcome to attend.

Our next book will be Poverty by America written by Matthew Desmond. A sign-up sheet to determine how many books need to be purchased will be placed in Fellowship Hall. If you are unable to sign up in person and would like to participate, please reach out and let me know so I can add you to our list. We plan on discussing the book sometime in February.

On December 10th, we join others around the globe to observe World Human Rights Day. It commemorates the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It is a document that states the 30 "inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." It was adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly.

This year, there will be a presentation and service project prepared by the organization Arm in Arm at 7:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall or contact Kate Moore.

Kate Moore

WORSHIP COMMITTEE – An Active Church Community

The Slackwood Worship Committee continues to look for ways to provide meaningful services for those in our church family and those in the larger community. On October 4, our pews were filled with worshippers celebrating World Communion Sunday from both the Grace Taiwanese congregation and the Slackwood Presbyterian congregation. If you have never had the opportunity to be a part of this special service, please consider doing so next year. Thank you to all who participated and made the service memorable.

On October 10, Pastor Bowman and Seminary Intern Madalyn Sailors held a brief service for community members and their pets. The service was held outdoors and was appreciated by those in attendance.

The Service on November 1 will be a busy one. During the worship service, we will remember those we have lost this last year during our All Saints' Day observance. If you wish to add a name to the list of those who will be remembered, please either sign up in Fellowship Hall or reach out to Carol Belles.

The Advent Season is fast approaching. Stay tuned to next month's newsletter for information regarding worshipping opportunities.

The Worship Committee typically meets on the fourth Sunday of the month after the service. All are welcome to attend. Our next meeting is Sunday, October 25.

Kate Moore

SHARING OUR DEEPEST SORROW

We were all deeply saddened to learn of the death of a very special, courageous young man, MaryJane Inman and Dan Sergott's 19-year-old son, Chuck Sergott. Chuck had been battling cancer for ten years of his young life but sadly lost the battle on October 3rd. Our sympathies are extended to MaryJane as an active worshipper with the Slackwood family whose strength and positivity were an inspiration to all of us as she shared the struggles of her precious son's illness. We ask for peace for MaryJane and Dan, as well as Chuck's extended family and friends, as they seek the Lord's comfort during this difficult time. Services for Chuck were held on Friday, October 9th.