

INTERPRETATION

Sewickley Presbyterian Church Newsletter
March/April 2019



Lenten Sermon Series

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS



OFFICE

Hours
Monday - Friday 9 AM - 5 PM

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NEWSLETTER

The SPC newsletter, **Interpretation**, is published six times a year. Please make submissions to, or if you have any questions contact, Jennifer Johnson at jjohnson@sewickleypresby.org.

VISITATION

If you or a member of your family are in the hospital and would like a visit, please call the church office to let us know.

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LENT & RELAXATION

Thank you!

Before I say anything else, I want to offer my thanks for the gracious welcome that my family and I have received over the last several weeks. I'm so excited to be a part of the ministry here, and thankful for the hospitality from each member of the congregation and the staff.

As I am beginning my time here, I can't help but notice that this seems to be a season of new beginnings. Not only are we still in the early months of a new year, but as we say goodbye to Sarah Bird, we are also beginning a search for a new Associate Pastor. Ultimately, that search will lead to the beginning of a new chapter in the story of what God is doing in and through this congregation. It can be both exciting and daunting to prepare for the possibilities and ministries that are headed our way in the coming months. Perhaps this is where one more beginning can be helpful, along with some math (don't worry - it's pretty simple math).

In just a few weeks, we will begin the season of Lent, the season in the church calendar that leads us to Easter. Christians usually think of Lent as forty days of preparation before Easter Sunday. That definition works unless you take time to count. This year the season begins on March 6, and Easter Sunday is on April 21. If you get out a calendar and count the days, Lent actually spans forty-six days. Using some basic subtraction, that means six days are unaccounted for!

So what are the extra six days in Lent? The short answer is - they are Sundays.

There is an ancient practice of considering every Sunday a holiday. A season like Lent, a season of repentance and preparation, can't possibly last for forty days without rest. To take forty days preparing for the exciting things God is doing on Easter, you'll need to take time every Sunday to celebrate, to relax, and to worship. As we look ahead to all the exciting things coming our way with all of our new beginnings, this ancient practice may be helpful. Let's commit to doing the hard work of following God's call. Let's prepare for the ministries God has in store for us. Let's live and proclaim the gospel in our homes, neighborhoods, schools and, workplaces. And in the midst of it all, every week, let's come together to celebrate, to relax, and to worship.

As we prepare for new beginnings, as we get ready for what God is about to do, let's continue gathering to share stories of what God is doing in our lives right now. Let's explore scripture as we remember what God has already done. Let's give thanks that God loves us no matter what.

In this season of beginnings, I am grateful for the ways God is already working through this congregation, and I am excited for what God is about to do. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of it!

With gratitude,

Rev. Derek R. Davenport



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WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

March 1 | 11 AM | Sanctuary

World Day of Prayer (WDP), which began in 1927, is held every year in March. It is a day where Christians in our community (and around the world) get together to pray and worship together.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of WDP in Sewickley. Local churches take turns hosting the service each year. However, since the first service in 1929 was held in our church, it seemed fitting for SPC to host it again this year.

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide, ecumenical movement of Christians of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year, and who, in many countries, have a continuing relationship in prayer and service (www.wdp-usa.org). It is initiated and carried out in more than 170 countries and regions. Through WDP, the focus is on prayer and action and how they are inseparable and have immeasurable influence in the world.

All are invited and welcome to join church and community members for worship on March 1. The service begins at 11 AM and will be followed by lunch in the dining room.

PEACE, LOVE & FRIENDSHIP

The Golden rule teaches us to “Do unto others as you would want them to do unto you.” (*Matthew 7:12*) Two of our Fruits of the Spirit, Love and Kindness, are Fruits we teach our children to live by every day. In FriendShip, we talk to our children about the importance of loving our family and friends and always being kind to everyone.

Peace is the February Fruit of the Spirit in the FriendShip Preschool. By showing Love and Kindness, we bring Peace and the Fruit of Gentleness into our lives and the world around us.

The FriendShip children had so much fun decorating hearts for their family and friends and showing their love towards them. Peace, Love and Friendship --who needs little donuts?



DOLLARS & SENSE

4

Did you know?

A new wrought iron handrail on the Grant Street steps was installed. The railing was added to increase safety for those entering and exiting the building.



Another project you might have noticed is the new signage throughout the church building. Those of us who are used to the inner workings of our main church building know where to go and how to get there. For those who aren't familiar with the labyrinth-like qualities of our building, it can be a frustrating experience to find your way around. It was even more of a challenge to tell someone how to get to a particular room. Figuring out the best place for signs and what to put on the signs took a lot of thought and consideration, especially where the Robinson Room was concerned. There are still a few adjustments and additions that will be made in the near future, but take a look around and tell us what you think!





YOUR CALLING IN CHRIST

You are called to serve. Our charge from the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA):

“Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is a joy and privilege. Membership is also a commitment to participate in God’s mission. A faithful member bears witness to God’s love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ’s Church. Such involvement includes: taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation; lifting one another up in prayer; mutual concern and active support; studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life; supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents; responding to God’s activity in the world through service to others; and working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment.”

As members of the Body of Christ, we are called to serve His church. Our newly updated *Serve* booklet has a variety of large and small ways for you to serve.

- Do you like to bake, garden, teach, usher, sing, work with kids, greet or help at a reception or dinner?
- Would you like to serve on a committee?

If you are a new member who hasn’t found your niche or current member who may want a change, please check out these volunteer opportunities and many more in the *Serve* booklet, found online or a hard copy in the Robinson Room. We need everyone! So come alongside, make new friends and enjoy some wonderful Christian fellowship!

For more information, please contact:
Beth Rom, Volunteer Coordinator
412-848-4837
brom@sewickleypresby.org

Susie Wardrop, Membership Committee
412-216-4776
swardrop7@gmail.com

APNC ONLINE

As our church begins its search for a new Associate Pastor, you can find updates on how the search is going on our website. The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee will continue meeting several times a month until a new pastor is found. Updates can be found at: <http://sewickleypresby.org/resources/apnc/>

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

With each new year, we welcome new Elders and Deacons to those who are already serving in those capacities. These individuals help to lead our church. You can find their names on our website under **About Us**.

Please be praying for these individuals as they meet each month to discern and make decisions about the future of the church and with the congregational support they provide to our church family.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Rev. Sarah Bird
3905 Murphy Road, Apt. 1
Nashville, TN 37209

SAVE THE DATES

Palm Sunday.....	April 14
Maundy Thursday.....	April 18
Good Friday.....	April 19
Easter.....	April 21
Progressive Dinner.....	May 4
Word Sung.....	May 5
Last Day of Sunday School.....	May 19
Summer Worship Schedule Begins.....	May 26
Kennywood.....	May 27
Vacation Bible School.....	June 17



MARCH 5 | 6 PM

All You Can Eat Pancakes & Sausages

Adults: \$8, Kids 12 & under: \$5

Families: \$25

New Members & their family: No Cost

RSVP by March 3



ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

MARCH 6 | 12 & 7:30 PM

Lent is a season of reflection and penitence leading up to Easter. Begin Lent with a worship service in our Chapel where Communion will be served along with the imposition of ashes to remind us of why we need our Redeemer.



LENTEN SERMON SERIES

Join us in worship during Lent as we accompany Jesus through the last 24 hours of his life as told by the Gospel of Mark.

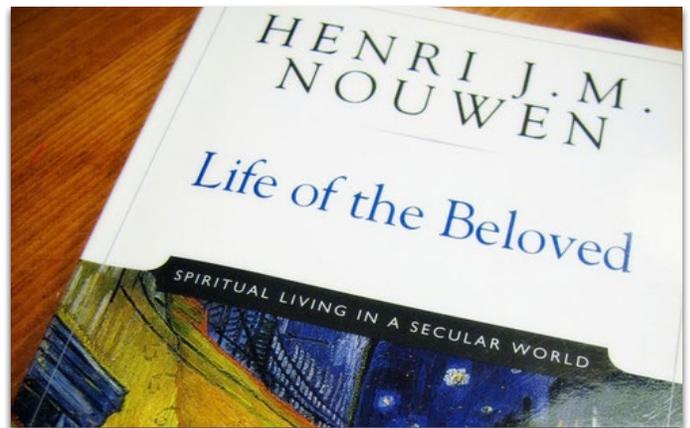
March 10: **The Last Supper**, Mark 14:12-25

March 17: **Where Is Your Gethsemane?**, Mark 14:32-50

March 24: **Denying Jesus**, Mark 14:53-72

March 31: **Son of the Father**, Mark 15:1-20

April 7: **Taking Up Your Cross**, Mark 15:21-32



LENTEN BOOK STUDY

Rev. Graham Standish will be leading a book study during the six Mondays during Lent, beginning on March 11 at 6:30 PM in the Faith House Lounge.

The book we will be studying is **The Life of the Beloved** by Henri Nouwen. Books may be purchased in the church office or on Amazon.com. Please sign-up on the church website to be a part of this study.

If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Standish at ngstandish@mac.com.

LENTEN STUDY Begins March 13

Are YOU ready to step out in faith?

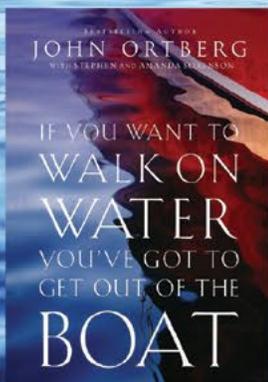
6 - 7:45 PM

Join us for a soup supper
followed by our Lenten study.
Programming for kids too!

ADULT STUDY

Visit www.sewickleypresby.org for all the details.

KIDS STUDY





“Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters”

Isaiah 55:1a

The first week in February I attended the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) conference in Galveston, Texas. Our conference was wonderful, the speakers and workshops were great, and it was awesome to be surrounded by hundreds of people who do what I do! The theme for the week was the scripture above, “come to the waters,” but there was a problem, we couldn’t find the water! The first few days of the conference the whole of Galveston was covered in fog, so much fog that you couldn’t see the ocean from our beach front conference center! As we struggled to see the water our first few days there, something remarkable happened on Thursday. A storm began to roll through, and as the rain clouds were approaching and the winds picked up, the fog was blown out to sea! Suddenly, we could see the ocean, we could see the horizon and the ships pulling through. Our path was cleared only through the coming of the storm.

How often are we given a simple task and find ourselves struggling to do it, only for the solution to come in a wholly unexpected way. As the storm brought us clear skies in Galveston, I am reminded that we often overcome our own obstacles through unexpected trials and tribulations. As we are called to come to the waters, sometimes we have to go through a storm, but God called us to the water for a reason, and He can’t wait to meet us there.

As we prepare for Lent and Easter, we’ll be focusing on Jesus Christ, the living water. Throughout our Lenten soup suppers, the kids will be learning about different water related relief efforts supported by the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), learning how this connects to us here in Sewickley, and growing in our understanding of the lessons we are taught in the Gospel. Through different stories, testimonies, and activities, we will learn to come to the waters in physical, metaphorical, and spiritual ways.

Looking forward to Easter, I am excited to lead us in our Good Friday Family service. We’ll try to show, experience, and explain as best as we can, the mysteries, miracles, and details surrounding the Easter story in an interactive and child-friendly way. We hope to see you there, and that you’ll join us in our Egg Dyeing party afterwards in the dining room.

– Brian Mack, Director of Children’s Ministries

Mark Your Calendars

Easter Egg Hunt | Palm Sunday, April 14
Faith House, 12 PM

Good Friday Family Service | April 19
Chapel, 10 AM

Egg Dyeing Party to follow in Dining room

Kennywood | Memorial Day, May 27

Vacation Bible School | June 17-21



ST. PATRICK & HIS STORY

With the coming of March, many of us 'celebrate' St. Patrick's day in one way or another. The St. Patrick's Day tradition began as a feast day held in honor of St. Patrick on the anniversary of the day he died. Christians were allowed to put aside their Lenten restrictions of food and alcohol consumption on this day. Eventually, the feast day evolved into a greater celebration including not only St. Patrick, but also Irish culture, history, and traditions. Though the feast day began in Ireland, the first St. Patrick's Day parade began in America. The parade tradition became exceptionally popular in the 1840s, when hundreds of thousands of Irish immigrants came to America to escape the potato famine.

Saint Patrick is considered the most recognizable of all of the patron saints of Ireland, though he was not of Irish descent himself. St. Patrick was born in Great Britain, and was first brought to Ireland as a slave after having been captured and taken from his home.

He eventually escaped from his captors, and returned home to Great Britain where he became a cleric. St. Patrick declared that it was a vision that served as the impetus for his return to Ireland, saying that the people of Ireland, as though speaking through one voice, called out to him, "We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come and walk among us." Of course, St. Patrick would return, bringing Christianity to the Irish people, who had been polytheistic to that point.

For twenty years he traveled the length and breadth of the island, baptizing people and establishing monasteries, schools and churches as he went.

By the time he died, on March 17, 461 (or 493 -- there is some disagreement about this), he left behind an organized church, the town of Armagh, and an island of Christians. This date -- March 17 -- has been commemorated as St. Patrick's Day ever since.

Perhaps the most well-known story about St. Patrick is also the most inaccurate tale about the patron saint of Ireland. According to legend, St. Patrick drove all of the snakes out of Ireland.

This would have been quite a feat, except for the fact that there were no snakes in Ireland to begin with. The frigid waters that surround the emerald isle are too cold for snakes to migrate through, making it impossible that snakes could have ever existed in Ireland.

The story is more likely a parable for how St. Patrick brought Christianity to Ireland while also largely eradicating paganism, which often used serpents as a symbol. By eliminating paganism, St. Patrick symbolically drove the snakes out of Ireland.



SPRING CONFIRMATION RETREAT

March 10 | 4-8 PM

One of the most exciting parts of Confirmation is being able to have an evening where we dive deeper into parts of our faith that we aren't so used to thinking about. Sometimes one of the biggest issues in our faith is figuring out how to translate what is in our head into a practical lifestyle. But this isn't a new problem; the Church has struggled with this since it began. We are excited to have Derek Davenport join us in an evening that centers around putting our faith into action in our everyday lives, in ways that you may not expect. Please save the date now!

SURF CITY

Aug 4-9 | Current 6th-8th graders | \$510

This is the most anticipated event of our calendar every year. We are excited to have the opportunity to take our group back with the PKF to Surf City. Whether you're flying off of the water tubes, rolling down the sand dunes, jamming out to beach front worship, or having some deep moments in small group time, there is DEFINITELY something for you at Surf City this year. Although August seems like a world away, we have to reserve our spots ASAP. So please make sure to sign up online quickly. Please talk with Mike Creamer about scholarships for family and/or single students.

YOUTH SUNDAY

Every year we have the privilege of stepping back and empowering our teens to lead us not in one or two parts of worship, but in the entire service. There is something beautiful about seeing the next generation step up and take the lead as we worship together as a church family. We are very grateful to Jeremy Fisher who helped guide the youth praise team and orchestra as they led us musically. But we are also grateful to all of you, the church, for embracing our teens and building them up during and after the services. It isn't easy to stand up in front of hundreds of people calling them to worship, leading a prayer or delivering a sermon. Our students stood up and did it, and it was a beautiful sight to behold. This is why Paul exhorted Timothy, in 2 Timothy 4:12, not to let anyone look down on him because he is young, but rather to be an example. Paul knew that age had nothing to do with faithfulness, with leadership, or with passion. Instead, he empowered Timothy to be an example, and that is what we as a church must continue to do with our teens time and time again. Teenagers are not the church of tomorrow -- they are part of the church of today!





MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCK-IN

Our annual Lock-In was a great hit this year. Nineteen 6th - 9th graders spent 14 hours together at the Faith House on February 22 into February 23. The kids loved ping-pong, impromptu dance-offs, a trip to the movies to see *How to Train Your Dragon*, a scavenger hunt through the village, and much more. We are grateful for our fearless leaders who kept everyone safe throughout the evening: Moira Gledhill, Caryn Doege, and Bridgett Bates.





CENTER FOR HOPE

In January, we were able to feed 81 guests at the Center for Hope! There was even enough food for seconds and for people to take home leftovers. We served pulled pork, salad, and fresh fruit.

For those of you who support the CFH dinners by cooking and shopping, but perhaps have never had the opportunity to see the faces of the guests, please know how very grateful everyone is for your support of these dinners. We couldn't do it without you.

If you are interested in taking part in our monthly dinners, please visit our website. On the Events page, you will find a link to sign-up to help. Please direct questions to Gretchen Burnham at rgburnham@comcast.net or 412.741.2314.

P2P DATE CHANGE

The Parkwood Presbyterian Church has requested to trade SPC for a P2P date, so we have accommodated their request! We will be volunteering on April 13 (instead of June 15). As the date grows closer, please visit our website to sign-up to help. Thank you!



PRODUCE 2 PEOPLE

I want to give you all a big thank-you from the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. We really appreciate the great turn-out for P2P in January, and that you hung in there with us despite some pretty worrisome last-minute weather predictions.

We know that it can be pretty intimidating and emotional when folks reach out for help with feeding their families—especially that first time doing so. Knowing we can serve the families that need it with respect, kindness, and an actual sense of fun then we have helped to erase some of those barriers that can feel so insurmountable.

The Pittsburgh Presbytery has been serving with us for nearly 10 years! That is an incredible number of families that have received help when they needed it, and a mind-boggling number of pounds of fresh, healthy food on tables. When we say that we couldn't do this without you, we mean that very literally! You giving up your Saturday mornings to come out—rain or shine or snow means that those folks can take a moment to breathe in the midst of what can be for some a pretty scary and isolating moment.

Another way that you can continue to help with this effort whether or not you're at a P2P is to always counter that incorrect and mean-spirited cultural narrative that poor or hungry people deserve to be poor or hungry, or that being poor is a moral failing. No one deserves to not have access to food for themselves and their families. We are a community of bounty! You are loving your neighbors as an action, and I'm so grateful for your service, and your commitment to making Pittsburgh better for ALL Pittsburghers.

Please reach out if you have any questions or comments about Produce to People or anything else Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank does; it's our favorite thing to talk about & we love empowering our volunteers with more knowledge!

It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood. Thank you for being one of the helpers.

In solidarity and service,

Ehrrin Keenan
Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank
ekeenan@pittsburghfoodbank.org



THE HUMAN CONNECTION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Everyone is human. We all experience happiness, fear, concern, empathy and love, though our circumstances and environments often are drastically different. And yet somehow, I had forgotten this simple message before arriving in the Dominican Republic this past January, as part of an outreach program coordinated by the organization Meeting God in Missions. The human divide that I felt before this trip was completely removed once I met the incredibly wonderful people of the Dominican Republic and witnessed how the Spirit continuously works amongst us.

I decided to go full-throttle the first day we volunteered in the Dominican villages. I knew nothing about dentistry, and yet there I found myself assisting two dentists with fillings and tooth extractions while using my choppy Spanish to manage a crowd. There were no private rooms for patients. Dental equipment had been set-up in the middle of a village where roosters, cats and dogs roamed freely amongst a backdrop of sugarcane fields. Patients approached the dental chair with trepidation, pain and ultimately complete elation once the dentists completed the procedures. How many of us have felt these same emotions when going to the dentist?

I made similar observations every day. The village names were different, and even though my tasks varied from day-to-day in different clinics or events, I connected with the Dominican people by recognizing that we all yearn for compassion, decency and care. We all need medical care when feeling sick. We all need optical care when our eyesight deteriorates. One elderly woman leapt out of her chair and hugged me tightly as I fitted her with new glasses. "Gracias a Dios!" she shouted, and indeed I was

"Thankful for God" as I connected with this woman who was nearly blind and now had clarity in her vision!

Originally, I intended to garden my final day in the field. The Spirit re-directed me and several other SPC attendees to instead talk with the villagers, play with children and hand-out small items, such as sunglasses, suckers and stickers. One woman, Dalalia, invited us to her home and asked us to meet her daughter with special needs. Dalalia wanted to provide the best for her family, which included her daughter who required several surgeries to improve her mobility. Dalalia had very few "things" in her life, yet she emphasized that she loved the Lord her God and was thankful for what Jesus had provided her. We all could relate. Our basic needs often focus on providing the best for our family and friends. However, sometimes in my life, I admit that I lack gratitude for Jesus' blessings. Dalalia was the one who invited the Spirit back into my life, while praying together in her tiny living room.

We are all called to give thanks to God in many ways. For me, I've sat on the sidelines of my faith, making excuses on the timing, inconvenience or the interferences of my work and parenting demands. Being a Christian takes a bit of work. How ironic that it took a trip to the Dominican Republic that prompted me to connect with my church family at Sewickley Presbyterian Church and to reconnect with God through the human (and Holy) spirit! You could say that I was the one who received the best pair of "new glasses" to help with my vision! "Gracias a Dios!"

Bryan Motzel, SPC member







FEED MY SHEEP

In October, 2018, many churches in Pittsburgh Presbytery hosted visitors from Blantyre Synod in southern Malawi. SPC hosted Andrew Machinjiri from our partner congregation, Chonde CCAP. We made sure he participated in as much of our church life as possible during his two week stay. He visited Center for Hope, and heard about the Thursday evening dinners we host once a month. He was very impressed by this ministry, and their food pantry.

On his last day before returning to Malawi, Andrew helped serve dinner at The Ladle in Ambridge. He said grace in his native Chichewa before Carol Weir said grace in English. He commented many times about the dinner programs at Center for Hope and The Ladle, mentioning specifically that these types of volunteer meals were new to him.

Inspired by his experience at The Ladle, on December 24, Andrew and his wife, Doreen, hosted a Christmas luncheon on behalf of Chonde CCAP in the church social hall. It was attended by approximately 200 Sunday School children and 100 elderly people. Following this example, the next luncheon will be hosted by the church. When we work with the Holy Spirit, what we do has effects we cannot imagine!

Barb Swan, SPC member



KNITTING FOR MISSION

Modeling some of the 30 hats delivered recently to the Crossroads Shelter in Beaver Falls are members of the Knitting for Mission group: (front from left) Mandy Ticknor, Joan Darby, Stephanie O'Kane, (back from left) Linda Liechty, Velma Saire, Pat Stover, Nancy Merrill. The group meets every Thursday from 1-3 PM in the Faith House and welcomes new and experienced knitters. The group will celebrate its fifth anniversary in early March. For information, contact Nancy Merrill nancy.merrill125@gmail.com.





Sewickley Presbyterian Church

LIVE · GROW · SERVE

414 Grant Street | Sewickley, PA | 15143

www.sewickleypresby.org

Join us for Holy Week

April 14

Palm Sunday

8, 9 & 11 AM Worship | 10 AM Sunday School

Egg Hunt

12 PM at the Faith House

April 18

Maundy Thursday

7:30 PM Worship

April 19

Good Friday

10 AM Worship for kids & families

Egg Dyeing Party immediately following service

7:30 PM Worship

April 21

Easter Sunday

8, 9 & 11 AM Worship

10 AM Continental Breakfast

(no Sunday School)