

INTERPRETATION

Sewickley Presbyterian Church Newsletter
Winter 2023

Above
ALL
else

be joyful
in hope,
patient in
affliction,
faithful
in prayer.

Romans 12:12

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SOCIAL MEDIA



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TAKING THE FIRST STEP

By Rev. Derek Davenport

How do I get started?

This is such a tricky question. We sometimes ask this in our personal lives. We may say things like “What’s the best way to start exercising?” or “I want to pick up a new hobby, but how should I start?” or even - “I’d sure like to clean out the garage, but I don’t even know where to begin.”

We may ask similar questions in our professional lives. “I would like to change careers, but how would I even start?” Maybe the question is more like “I’d like to go back to school, but I don’t know how to get started.”

The trick in each of these cases, of course, is that it often doesn’t matter. However you start, just start. You can adjust, improve, and adapt after you get started. But until you begin, you’re stuck.

We might even have similar questions in our faith. “I’d like to strengthen my faith, but I don’t know where to start.” Maybe your thought is “I’d like to read the Bible, but I don’t know where to start.” OR maybe you’re thinking “I wish I could do better at living my faith, but I don’t know how to begin.”

If you find yourself wondering about how to get started, the trick is to just try something! But if you need a little guidance nudge, here are some ideas that will help you take a simple, single step.

- Sign up on our website to be an usher. It’s one of the easiest, most rewarding ways to serve our church.
- Ask Rici about helping at the tech booth. If you’re not sure how to do it, don’t worry – we can teach you!
- Ask Hanna about helping with Children’s church. We can even help you get the necessary clearances.
- Ask Mike Creamer about chaperoning a youth event. Again, we can help you get your clearances.
- Sign up on our website to be part of our ministry to the Ladle or the Center for Hope

If you’re ready for something more regular, there are lots of other opportunities to deepen your faith.

- Attend one of our Bible studies or groups – Bible Basics, Koinonia, Journeymen, the Huddle, this year’s Soup Suppers, our Women’s Book Study, this year’s Lent women’s Bible Study, or our Knitting for Mission group.
- Ask Elizabeth about our CCM team and how you can help care for our congregation.
- Ask Erin about our adult education opportunities and how you can be part of them.
- Consider using the talents God has given you to serve one of our committees.
- Volunteer to help with Day on the Lawn

These are just a few of the many ways you can “get started” as you deepen and live out your faith. Sometimes that first step is the most challenging one. The trick is to take it and see where God leads you!



DOLLARS & SENSE

By Laura Mikush, Business Administrator

Did you know, *Per Capita* is the amount of support, per member, that our congregation remits to our Presbytery that is then sent onto our Synod and the General Assembly. This money is part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. It is the money that enables us to work with other Presbyterian churches in our Presbytery and across the country. It is also money that allows us to work with other churches to further the mission of Jesus Christ around the world.

Here is the breakdown of how Per Capita is calculated:

	2022	2023
Presbytery	\$ 23.41	\$ 23.45
Synod	\$ 2.40	\$ 2.40
General Assembly	\$ 8.98	\$ 9.85
Total	\$ 34.79	\$ 35.70

The rate above is then multiplied by the church's active membership number from December 31, 2021. So, for 2023 the rate of \$35.70 x 798 active members or \$28,488.60. For 2022, the amount was \$34.79 x 800 active members or \$27,832.

The Pittsburgh Presbytery offers a 5% discount if we pay this amount in full by January 31 of the current year. We have taken this discount in 2022 (\$1,391.60) and plan to do again in 2023 (\$1,424.43).



OUR NEW CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY

By Matt Braksick, SPC Member

A new command I give you. Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (John 13:34)

This is an exciting time in Congregational Care Ministry! After going through training, being interrupted by COVID and other leadership transitions, our team was commissioned last November, and we are ready to hit the ground running in 2023!

As described in our training, our mission is to “care and support one another through the peaks and valleys of our lives.” Our role is to: augment the congregational care role of our pastors (who simply do not have enough time to meet the ongoing personal spiritual needs of our 800 person congregation) and to support our brothers and sisters in Christ, as we are all called to do. We stand ready to help care for one another. Our purpose is to ensure our members feel connected, loved, cared and prayed for; and to know that our church is there for them. Our primary role is to be present, listen, pray, and help members navigate the peaks and valleys of life.

Personally, I am so grateful to be part of this ministry. I want to be a part of any effort that helps members know they are cared for and loved by this church. Twenty-seven years ago, my wife Leslie and I lost our 32-day old daughter Sydney. We were new to Sewickley; we knew only Leslie’s work colleagues, and we were not yet members of a church. Rev. Jean Henderson was introduced to us by our next-door

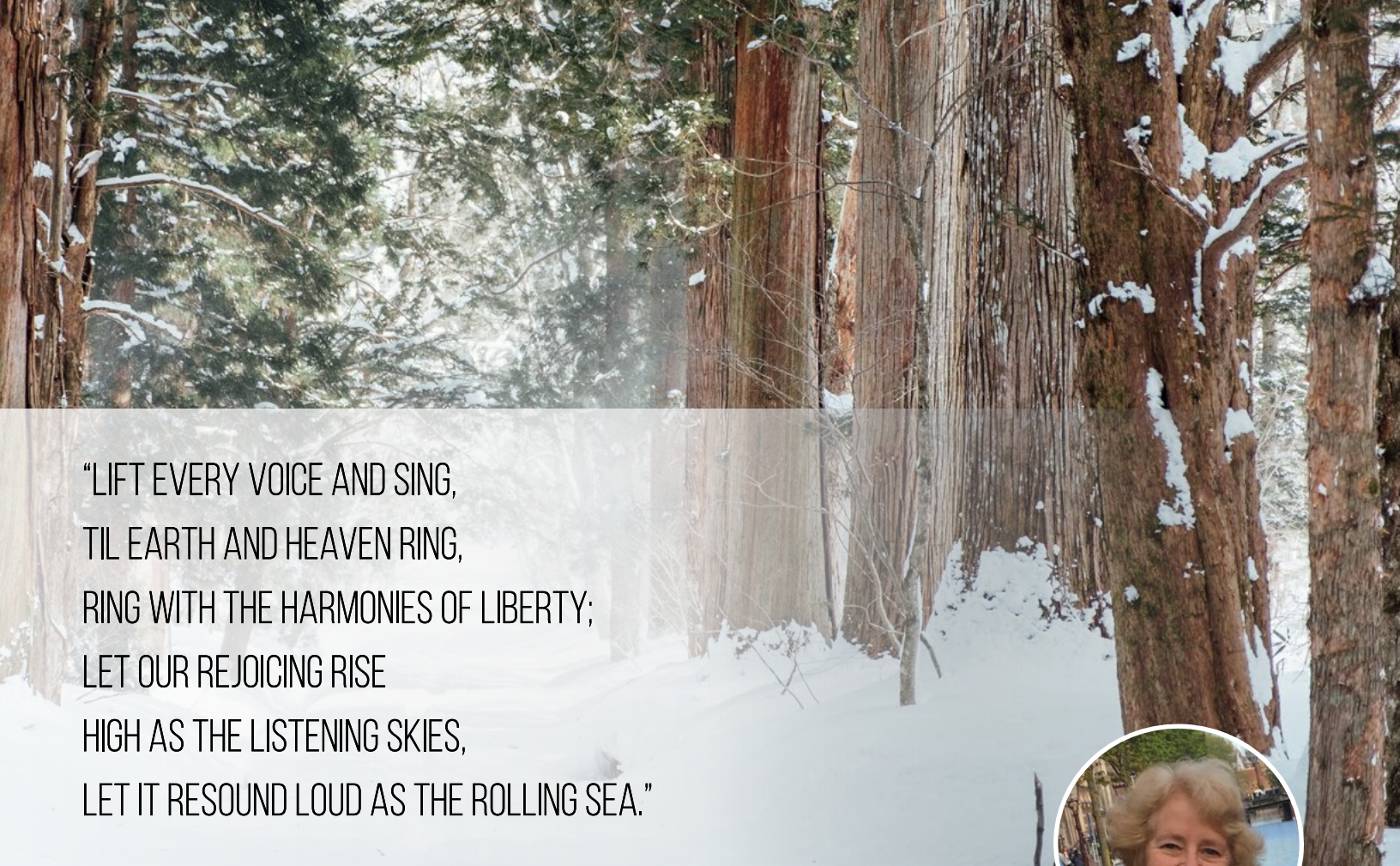
neighbor, and she became a loving force, not only helping us with the funeral, but walking with us through the difficult months that followed. Jean demonstrated the love of Jesus Christ and the Sewickley Presbyterian Church. She showed us what it looked like to actively care. I feel a very strong call to do the same for others in our church. I know my fellow Congregational Care team members feel likewise.

Our hope is that this ministry will grow with others choosing to go through training and joining the CCM effort, and that Congregational Care will become an integral part of members’ experience with our church. We hope it will help our church grow in love and community, and add to the strength and vitality SPC has long been known for.

The Sewickley Presbyterian Church shows up in many, many ways to provide outreach and mission. We are hoping this effort will be yet another way for us to show this same love to the members of our congregation as we actively care for one another.

If you or someone you know has a congregational care need, please call or email Elizabeth Szuba, our Director of Congregational Care, who can put you in touch with one of our team members. It will be our honor to walk alongside you and ensure you experience the full love and support of the Sewickley Presbyterian Church.

Contact: Elizabeth Szuba, eszuba@sewickleypresby.org **5**



"LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING,
TIL EARTH AND HEAVEN RING,
RING WITH THE HARMONIES OF LIBERTY;
LET OUR REJOICING RISE
HIGH AS THE LISTENING SKIES,
LET IT RESOUND LOUD AS THE ROLLING SEA."



MLK COMMUNITY WORSHIP SERVICE

By Jane Shadle, SPC member

Nearly 100 people sang the above lyrics from the early 1900s hymn, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, on Sunday, January 15, at Sewickley United Methodist Church. The Methodist Church graciously hosted an ecumenical worship service in observance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. Our church joined with St. Matthews AME Zion, St. Paul's Lutheran, and Sewickley United Methodist, our "siblings in Christ," as Rev. Hannah Loughman, the Methodist pastor phrased it.

The four pastors of these churches, including our own Rev. Emily Miller and Rev. Ryan Kobert from St. Paul's, wove together prayers, scripture, and the congregational singing of four powerful hymns, in barely an hour. Two gentlemen from St. Matthew's AME Zion beautifully sang "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," accompanied by the gifted pianist from Sewickley Methodist. Piercing words from Dr. King were peppered throughout the service:

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere... Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

And words like these, expressing Dr. King's hope:

"...that dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away... and the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty."

Rev. William Rankin of St. Matthews AME Zion preached an inspiring, uplifting, and yes, challenging, sermon based on Amos 5 to the folks gathered there, nearly 40 of whom were from Sewickley Presbyterian. Rev. Rankin charged us in today's church to eschew the "tranquilizing drug of gradualism"; to be salt, light, and yeast in the world, as Christ called us to be. Jesus did not do what was safe, political, or popular - but rather what is right. Rev. Rankin challenged us to do the same.

The service closed with those present earnestly singing the civil rights hymn, likely written in 1901, *We Shall Overcome*. Rev. Rankin encouraged us to join hands or elbows with those near us as we sang together. And we did - Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, and AME; white and black; all siblings in Christ, before he closed with the benediction and a charge to go out and do justice.

Thank you to all members of the Justice Ministries team, and especially, to Rev. Emily Miller for spearheading the effort for this inspiring community worship service.



MARDIGRAS

PANCAKE & SAUSAGE SUPPER



Tuesday, February 21 | 6-8 PM

What's better than pancakes & sausage on a Tuesday evening?
Having them with your church family along with lively music, fun for the kids, and celebrating our newest church members!
Join us as our pastors flip the pancakes & serve up a delicious dinner for you to enjoy while kicking off the Lent season.

RSVP online by February 13: sewickleypresby.org

FOR THE KIDS

Make a tambourine
Take part in a pancake flipping contest
Learn a little more about Mardi Gras
And tons of other fun!



COST?

There is no cost to attend,
but donations are
gladly accepted!



FRIENDSHIP

By Erin Leghorn, Director of FriendShip Preschool

The students and staff at FriendShip Preschool are having a wonderful school year! Every time we reach this point in the year, I'm amazed that we've already completed almost half of our school year, until I think back to the first few days for school and realize how much growth everyone has made since September.

In the fall, some of our classes went on field trips within our community. They visited the fire station, Fern Hollow Nature Center, and the pumpkin patch at Sewickley United Methodist Church. We also welcomed visitors to the school from the fire department, the police department, and the Sewickley Public Library.

Our FriendShip II and Pre-K class had the opportunity to have Chapel Time this fall. In October, Pastor Emily shared the story of the seeds teaching us all that we can grow in God's love and share it with others, while Mr. Jeremy played his guitar and taught us a song or two. In December, Miss Hanna taught the children about the meaning of a candy cane and how it can teach us about God's love for us.

In November, I visited our classrooms to talk about SPC's Food Basket Project and how they could help others in need by donating food. Each class kept a basket in the classroom and students were able to place their donations in the basket when they brought them to school. Pre-K even sorted and counted all of their donations for a little extra math practice. Our families answered the call filling our baskets to overflowing!

Before the school closed for winter break, FriendShip II and Pre-K put on their annual Christmas programs. Both of which were a huge success.

Now that January has arrived, we are excited for all that the next few months will bring! On January 3, we kicked off registration for the 2023-2024 school year! Families of currently enrolled students as well as families that are members of SPC had the first opportunity to register. Registration for new families started on January 17. September feels so far away, but it's so exciting to get this first preparation for the new school year underway!

In the next few months, we're looking forward to more visits from the Sewickley Public Library, a few more field trips, Chapel Time, plus a special program from the Pittsburgh Zoo! We can't wait to see what special animal friends they bring to show us! We have a lot to look forward to before the end of the school year!

Finally, I would like to say a special thank you to the Property Committee for approving, and Keith Boyer and Tim Bingman for installing, a new handrail in one of our stairwells for our Children's Corner class! Our 2-year-olds do a great job coming down the stairs, but sometimes their little arms just don't quite reach the handrail. The new, lower handrail is just their height and makes coming down the stairs much easier for them and for their teachers!

As always, thank you to our SPC congregation for your continued support of our preschool program!





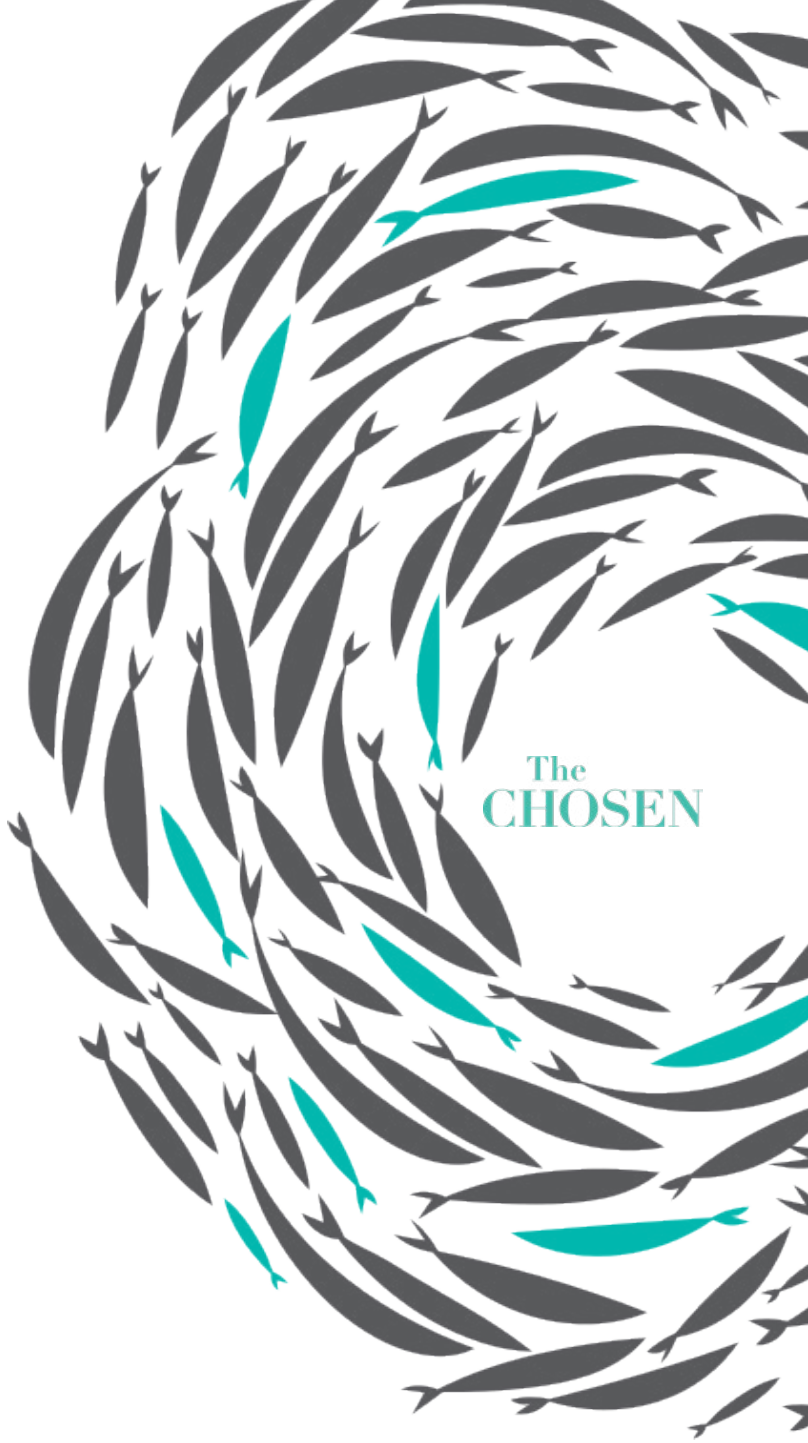
MEETING JESUS

By Rev. Emily Miller, Associate Pastor

Have you ever wanted to meet Jesus? Have you ever wanted to hear Him tell His parables firsthand and ask Him follow-up questions? Have you ever wanted to experience what it feels like to have Him look you directly in the eye? Well, I can't give you all that, but I can give you the next best thing: "The Chosen." For 4 weeks in March, SPC women will gather with women from area churches to watch 4 episodes from Season 1 of "The Chosen" and learn about the true nature of Jesus.

"The Chosen" is a video-based drama series by producer Dallas Jenkins about the life of Jesus and His disciples. Season 1 and Season 2 are presently available online and on DVD. Season 3 is currently being released episode by episode. This series depicts the life of Jesus as he travels, teaches and calls people to discipleship. We watch Him transform people through instant miracles and through life changing transformation of the heart. We see people accept Him and reject Him. It is beautifully done and thought provoking.

Through this "watch party" experience, we hope to dig deep and get to know our Lord a bit better, know ourselves a bit better, and prepare ourselves for His joyous resurrection on Easter Sunday. A time of discussion will follow each viewing. Breakfast goodies will be served. Hope to see you there!



WHAT: The Chosen watch party

WHEN: Saturdays, March 4, 11, 18, 25
9:30 — 11:15 AM

WHERE: The Dining Room

WHO: Women of SPC & friends from our community



Staff News



WELCOMING A NEW CHOIR DIRECTOR

We are happy to welcome Michael Hammer as our new Choir Director! March 15 will be his first day with us.

Michael has served churches in Ohio, Maryland, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, corresponding to four stages of his life: growing up south of Cleveland, he later attended the Cleveland Institute of Music (Bachelor of Music); then graduate school at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore (Masters and Doctoral of Musical Arts degrees). After marrying Kristen Ehrenberger, he moved to Illinois where she was in graduate and medical school (she has an MD and a PhD); then it was on to Pittsburgh for her residency.

Michael has given concerts in such far-flung places as Taipei and Athens, a cave in Pennsylvania, and cathedrals in Pittsburgh. As both organist and pianist he has played for choral festivals, and as soloist with orchestras or accompanist with singers. Every new chapter brings with it a diversity of musical situations. But church music has been the backbone that has continued from the time he got his first regular organist position at the age of 16. He grew up in the Presbyterian church, playing the piano for a children's choir when he was only 8. "But the kids were about 4 so they had to call me mister."

Michael lives in Munhall with his wife and a very affectionate cat named Rosamunda. He is also a marathon runner! He is looking forward to serving at SPC and reaching out to our congregation and community through our music ministries.



DISCIPLESHIP

Erin Leghorn has been directing our FriendShip Pre-school since 2021. She has also stepped in to help with children's ministry needs as we have gone through the transitions of the pandemic and staff changes.

On December 1, Erin's role changed at SPC. She is now our Director of Discipleship. She will continue as our Pre-school director, as well. In her new role, Erin works with our Adult Ed sub-committee, arranges for guest speakers, assists with Children's Ministries and works closely with our pastors to ensure we have well-rounded discipleship content.



TECH INTERN

As you have no doubt heard, at one point or another, we are always needing help with the technical aspects of Sunday mornings. On January 8, we welcomed Alexis Merritt as our Tech Intern. She comes to us with a background in live-streaming, radio, and videography.

Alexis is helping with our Sunday mornings services. She will mainly be focusing on the live-stream, but will also assist with the other technical needs we have.



SPC KID NEWS

By Hanna Mellor, Children's Ministry Coordinator

What a wonderful and fun Christmas Pageant we experienced in December! I could not have asked for a better group of kids to work with, especially as a first time director! The cast truly knocked my socks off! With a limited rehearsal schedule, I was not sure that would be possible! I am immensely proud of each child for helping to do a comical and cool rendition of the Christmas pageant. Thank you audience for welcoming us to the stage with open arms!

Also, a huge thank you to Emma Leghorn, Erin Leghorn, Andrew Birnie, Jennifer Johnson, and the entire SPC staff for all of their help bringing our production together! Maybe we will have to do a spring pageant to capitalize on all of the talent and loving support from our SPC community!

Our new Advent grab-n-go craft and snack table was so fun! We loved learning about each week of Advent and what each candle represented. It was something different and new we tried this year; thank you to all of the kids, parents, grandparents, and friends that participated this year!

I want to invite you to celebrate the beginning of the Lenten season with us on Tuesday, February 21, for our Mardi Gras Pancake Supper. Kids will have the opportunity to eat

pancakes, make their very own tambourine, take part in a contest, and have fun!

To continue on throughout the Lenten season, we will be having soup suppers on Wednesday evenings from March 1 to March 29. Kids will eat, join in on a craft, watch a video, and have fun together.

We are also excited to celebrate the Easter season and learn what that means! We will be celebrating Easter with an Egg Hunt on Palm Sunday after the 11 AM service. Kids can find all of the hidden eggs and do a fun Easter craft! Then on Good Friday, after the 10 AM Family service, we invite kids to fellowship together for a mindful egg dying session! Mark your calendars!

UPCOMING KID EVENTS

February 21: Mardi Gras Pancake Supper

February 24: Kids' Night Out | Football FUN

March 1-29: Wednesday Lenten Soup Suppers begin

March 24: Kids' Night Out | Candy Craze

April 2: Palm Sunday Egg Hunt

April 28: Kids' Night Out | Lego - Lets Go!



SPC YOUTH

By Mike Creamer, Ministry Associate of Youth & Young Adults

The fall was filled with all kinds of SPC favorites for our teens.

- We enjoyed the beauty of the crisp fall weather with our Campfire night.
- For the first time since Covid began, we had our middle school Lock-In!
- We took a small but mighty group of high schoolers to Laurelville this year despite the bitter cold.
- Christmas stockings were collected for the kids at the Center for Hope again this year thanks to the support of our entire church.
- We were able to send out our college care packages to all our college students around the country, who are away from us for this season of life but are an integral part of our church family.
- And finally, we wrapped up the year (pun intended) with a white elephant gift exchange and gingerbread house-making contest at our annual Christmas party.

As we look ahead to this new year, we are hoping to see some exciting new things arise and we hope we will see both old and new faces joining us!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb. 12 Youth Sunday & Little Pantry Food Drive
 Feb. 21 Mardis Gras Dinner
 Celebrating 2022 Confirmation Class
 March 11 QV Food Relief Service Day | 8:30-10:30 AM





HELP OUR NEIGHBORS

By Nancy Merrill, SPC Member

Our Neighbors in Need program fills an important need for personal care items that are not covered by food stamps. The items listed here were specifically requested by our mission partners: Center for Hope, Sewickley Community Center, The Ladle, and the Sewickley YMCA's Little Free Pantries.

As you do your shopping this month, please take this list with you and pick up some of these items to share with our neighbors:

SHOPPING LIST (not travel size)

Toothbrushes	Toothpaste
Deodorant	Ivory bar soap
Shampoo	Conditioner
Feminine products	Toilet paper
Shaving cream	Razors
Dish detergent (med. size)	Ziplock bags
Laundry detergent (med. size)	Kitchen garbage bags
Baby wipes (hypoallergenic)	Baby powder
Diapers (size 4,5,6)	Pull-ups (size 6)

Please place items in the bins labeled "Neighbors in Need" inside the church entrances.

Financial contributions are also welcome.

- Online: <https://sewickleypresby.org/give/>
- By check to 414 Grant Street, Sewickley 15143

Monetary donations allow us to supplement the donated items. Neighbors in Need also has an Amazon wish list https://www.amazon.com/registries/custom/213JV4A58QBV6/guest-view?ref=cm_sw_em_r_gr_un_HCbXRG0lstWvB

Items ordered on Amazon are shipped to the church.

Questions? Contact any member of the SPC Neighbors in Need committee: Glenis Levine, Nancy Merrill, Tara Nixon, and Stephanie O'Kane.



FILL LITTLE PANTRIES

On Youth Sunday (February 12), our Youth will be hosting a food drive to support the YMCA Little Pantry Project. There will be bins to place items in at the entrances to the church building. This will be our only collection day.

ITEMS NEEDED

canned items: hearty soups, tuna, chicken, beef
peanut butter & jelly in plastic jars
boxed rice, instant mashed potatoes
dry pasta, soup mixes, mac & cheese
cereal, oatmeal, syrup, pancake mix (only requires water)
applesauce, granola bars, canned or dry fruit
canned potatoes, canned franks & beans



SOMETHING TO EAT?

Throughout the year, members of our church family provide meals to those in need in our local communities. Providing meals consists of donating, whether purchased or home-made, the various parts of a meal and helping to serve and clean up.

The most familiar to some might be the Center for Hope where we provide a dinner each month. We also provide five meals a year to The Ladle in Ambridge. Both places need our help providing each meal.

The Ladle is an ecumenical soup kitchen and food pantry housed at St. John's Lutheran Church in Old Economy. SPC has been a supporter of this important local ministry since its inception in 2008, providing financial resources and preparing and serving dinner on four to five Mondays each year. A seated meal is served from 5-6 PM and approximately 12-15 volunteers are needed each time.

The next Ladle dinner is on February 6 and we still need many people to help. Please consider lending a hand. The sign-up sheet is on our website under the Event/Sign Up page. Follow the link called ***Mission Dinners***.

If you would like to be added to The Ladle email list, please contact Carol Weir at mcmweir@gmail.com.



¿HABLAS ESPAÑOL?

The Center for Hope has several Latino families who speak very little English and are coming to the food pantry. The Center is looking for volunteer translators to assist them while they are checking in to the pantry. The days volunteers are needed are:

Wednesdays 1-3 PM

Thursdays 3-5 PM

If you are able to help or would like additional information, please call Gretchen Burnham at 412.818.9660 or contact the Center for Hope directly: 724.251.4899.



THANK YOU FROM THE UKRAINE

November 2022, Prague

Dear friends of Sewickley,

Diaconia ECCB cooperates with the Ukrainian Center in Nusle, Prague. The center was created on the basis of an association of Ukrainian and Czech volunteers with a backing of non-profit organization Ukrainsko Evropská Perspektiva. The purpose of this center is to provide basic life needs for those who arrive in Prague from wartime Ukraine. In addition to the distribution of food packages, provision of accommodation for Ukrainian families in need, there are educational courses and lessons focused on integration and adaptation there. The courses here are aimed at mothers with children and seniors who had to leave their homes and flee to the Czech Republic from Ukrainian cities bombed by Russian army. Czech language lessons, cyber security courses for children, English courses for children take place here. The center serves as a safe space for friendly meetings, for training, psychological support, consultations, support when looking for a job.

In October 2022 Diaconia donated five Lenovo M10 Plus LTE tablets with 100 GB Internet cards to the center. These tablets will be used by the center in teaching courses. The most touching moment was when, on that occasion, handmade cards by children from the PCUSA church in Sewickley were given to Ukrainian children in the center. The younger children were given handmade dolls and little bags carefully knitted by the Sewickley PCUSA knitting group.

Thank you, everyone in Sewickley PCUSA, for your lovely support.

Lucie Slámová
Diaconia ECCB





Sewickley Presbyterian Church

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www.sewickleypresby.org

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?

you are!

February 24 | 6-8 PM

Join our church family as we gather in groups of 8-10 to enjoy a casual supper in the warmth of your host's homes!

Here's how it works:

Sign-up online; You'll be assigned to a host home;
The host will let you know what you can bring;
Show up & have a fun evening with friends old & new!

Worried about childcare? There will be a Kids' Night Out that evening, so kids ages 4 to grade 5 can hang out at the Faith House while you have dinner.

Strict Deadline to RSVP: February 15

