INTERPRETATION

Sewickley Presbyterian Church Newsletter | July 2026



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WHAT'S INSIDE?

1: Cover
2: SPC Staff / What's Inside
3: Pastor's Message
4: Capital Campaign Improvement Photos
5: Capital Campaign Update: Moving Forward with Phase 2
6: Membership
7: Did You Know? / Koinonia / World Day of Prayer
8: Adult Education / The Chosen
9: Evergreens
10: Educate, Engage, Activate
11: Mission Partners / Neighbors in Need
12: Amigos Ministry
13: Friendship Preschool
14: SPC Kids: Sharing God's Love
15: SPC Kids Photo Gallery
16: SPC Youth: Deepening Faith
17: SPC Youth Photo Gallery
18: Day on the Lawn
19: Lost and Found
20: Music Ministry Photo Gallery
21: More Than a Melody / Multiplying Music
22: SPC Worship Playlist / Tech Committee
23: God's Creation
24: Back Cover / Campbell Stoner Weekend

SOCIAL MEDIA



Summer Break!

By: Dr. Rev. Derek R. Davenport, Pastor and Head of Staff

What a year it has been!

As we enjoy the summer, we find ourselves looking back on a full and energizing program year. In the past few months, we have welcomed visitors to our congregation from around the region, around the country, and around the world. We have hosted the House Tour, a youth choir from Florida, and our partners from the Czech Republic.

As we have celebrated existing friendships and forged new relationships, we have also concluded our yearlong study of scripture. We have explored our favorite passages of scripture as well as lesser-known passages and books. We have spent time in the gospels and psalms, but also in minor prophets and epistles.

In the midst of welcoming regional, national, and global friends and partners in ministry, as well as studying the breadth of scripture, we have continued to engage in so many life-giving and life-changing events. In the pages of this issue of Interpretation, you will read about the changes to our property, ministries for people of all ages, and programs like Koinonia and the Amigos. You will learn about our music ministry, and ways that we support young families in our community.

Naturally, since summer has arrived, we are turning much of our attention to Day on the Lawn. There are so many ways to get involved in what has become a signature event of Sewickley Presbyterian Church – I encourage you to find the way that you can support our mission partners through Day on the Lawn this year. If you'd like to learn about the impact the event can have, you'll find a wonderful reflection from Doug Plocki in this issue.

God is using the ministries of Sewickley Presbyterian Church to bless not only our own congregation, but our friends and neighbors in this community, around the country, and around the world. I encourage you to be a part of the joyful work of this ministry!













Campaign Update

Moving Forward With Phase Two

By Mark Gensheimer

As I shared a few weeks ago, Phase One and part of Phase Two of our safety, accessibility, and improvement projects have now been completed. Thanks to the dedication of many volunteers, church leaders, and supporters, our church is becoming safer, more accessible, and more welcoming for all. These improvements are helping create spaces that better support worship, fellowship, ministry, and community life for everyone who walks through our doors.

Our goal is to raise approximately $3 million through the Pointing to the Cross Capital Campaign. To date, we have raised nearly $2 million, in addition to several designated gifts. This progress is a testament to the faithfulness and generosity of our congregation, and we are deeply grateful for the support we have received so far.

While much has been accomplished, important work remains. Our two primary projects are enhanced church security and upgraded elevator controls, which together will cost approximately $300,000. These improvements will help ensure that our facilities remain safe, accessible, and welcoming for all who gather here for worship, fellowship, and ministry. In addition, 10% of all funds raised through the campaign will be dedicated to mission work. Our Mission Committee is prayerfully discerning how these resources can be used to make the greatest impact in our community and beyond.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to this effort. Because of your generosity, we are investing not only in buildings and infrastructure, but in the future ministry of Sewickley Presbyterian Church. These projects will help us continue to be a place where people encounter God's love, build meaningful relationships, and grow in their faith for years to come.

As we look ahead, we remember the generations before us who faithfully invested in this church and its ministries. Many of the spaces and resources we rely on today began as future-focused dreams supported by those who came before us. Their vision and generosity created opportunities for worship, discipleship, outreach, and community that continue to bless us today.

Now it is our turn to continue that legacy. The improvements we make today are not just for our current needs, but for the generations who will worship, gather, learn, and serve here long after us. Through this campaign, we are preparing our church for the future God is calling us toward.

If you have already given, thank you. If you have not yet had the opportunity, we invite you to prayerfully consider joining us in this important work. Together, we can continue Pointing to the Cross and ensuring that Sewickley Presbyterian Church remains a vibrant place of faith, hope, and ministry for generations to come.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GOAL

$3,000,000

124 PLEDGES RECEIVED AS OF JUNE 2026

$1,898,930



We Keep on Growing!

In April, we welcomed **15** new members to our church family! If you see them, please introduce yourself! If you are interested in membership, please contact Sharon Barber in the church office.


Anne Blazak


Chris Blazak


Drew Coolidge


Emily Coolidge


Norm Dingmore


Chris Dugan


Emily Dugan


Cindy Gray


Dave Gray


Emily Hammel


Michael Hammel


Lisa Jankowski


Ron Jankowski


Mary Saussol


Joyce Weber









Did You Know?

By Laura Mikush, Business Administrator

Like many Presbyterians, you may have wondered, “Exactly what does per capita do?” Per capita is the amount of support, per member, that our congregation remits to our Presbytery that is then sent on to 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 figured:

	2025	**2026**
Presbytery	$24.87	$25.74
Synod	$ 2.40	$ 2.40
General Assemby	$10.84	$11.86
	$38.11	**$40.00**

The rate above is then multiplied by the church’s active membership number from December 31, 2025. So, for 2026 the rate of $40.00 x 819 active members or $32,760.00. For 2025 the amount was $38.11 x 795 active members or $30,297.45.

The Pittsburgh Presbytery does offer a Five Percent discount if we pay this amount in full by January 31st of the current year. We have taken this discount in 2025 ($1,514.88) and did it again in 2026 ($1,638.00).

If you would be willing to help defray the cost of this annual expense to our church, please send a check to Sewickley Presbyterian Church, 414 Grant Street, Sewickley, PA 15143 Attention: Laura Mikush. In the “subject” line please write, Annual Per Capita.

Any amount to cover the expense for you, and the members of your household, or any additional donation for this purpose would be greatly appreciated.

Koinonia

By Rev. Barb Kennedy, Parish Associate

This past year, the ladies in the Koinonia Bible study went through two books.

In the fall, we began reading our first book written by Lysa TerKeurst called “Trustworthy: Overcoming our Greatest Struggles to Trust God” a study on 1st and 2nd Kings. There were many lively conversations around the tables as we discussed the kings of the Old Testament - kings like David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, and Ahab (who was married to Queen Zezebel). We learned that in most cases the king we were studying “did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him.” However, there were a few kings like Jehoash and Josiah who followed after God and did good for their people.

After finishing this study, we moved to our next book by Gretchen Saffles called “A Well-Watered Woman: Rooted in Truth, Growing in Grace, Flourishing in Faith.” We had discussions about what it means to ABIDE in Christ. The author taught us to Accept pruning, Believe God’s Word, Identify false vines, Delight in Jesus, and Endure hardships with Joy.

At the end of our study year, we had a celebration to commemorate our time together. We gathered in the dining room for food and fellowship with some gifts to remind us to “Live life in full bloom.”

We look forward to gathering again in the fall to see what God has for us to learn next.

World Day of Prayer

By Ann Strong

Women from eight Sewickley area churches planned and participated in World Day of Prayer 2026 at St. Stephen’s Anglican Church on March 6th.

The 97th year World Day of Prayer was held in Sewickley. This year’s service, Rest for the Weary, was written by women in Nigeria based on Matthew 11:28-30.

Next year’s service will be held at Divine Redeemer Parish. World Day of Prayer will return to SPC in 2029 for its 100th Anniversary in Sewickley.

Uncovering the Church's Blind Spots

By Jane Shadle

During the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial unrest following George Floyd's killing, Rev. Ralph Lowe and Rev. Brian Wallace recorded six "Awareness and Transformation" conversations that were used as Adult Education classes at SPC in 2021. Five years later, the two Presbyterian pastors returned to Ansby Hall for a three-week series exploring White Cultural Dominance & the Church, Christian Nationalism, and Social Media and Faith Formation.

In the first session, Ralph and Brian discussed white cultural dominance and how white experiences are often treated as the norm while the experiences of people of color are minimized. Both pastors emphasized the value of relationships across racial lines and encouraged learning from voices with different lived experiences. Brian stressed the importance of approaching others with curiosity rather than judgment. The second week focused on Christian nationalism and the relationship between church and state throughout history. Ralph contrasted patriotism—the love of one's country—with Christian nationalism, which elevates national identity and political power above Christian faith. Both pastors pointed to the Presbyterian Confession of 1967, which affirms that Christ alone is Lord. The final session examined social media's impact on faith and community. While social media can raise awareness and mobilize support for important causes, Ralph and Brian cautioned that it can also create echo chambers, diminish meaningful dialogue, and contribute to rising anxiety among young people. They noted that church involvement can provide affirmation and connection that social media often cannot.

The series resonated strongly with the congregation, averaging 50 attendees per week—the highest Adult Education attendance of the year. Through their thoughtful and engaging conversations, Rev. Lowe and Rev. Wallace challenged Sewickley Presbyterian Church to thoughtfully engage these important issues while remembering that our ultimate allegiance belongs not to our country, culture, or technology, but to Jesus Christ.



The Chosen Series

By Erin Leghorn, Director or Discipleship

In February of this year, approximately 30 women from our church and neighboring churches, gathered in the Dining Room on Saturday mornings to have breakfast and watch episodes of the television show The Chosen.

This study was started a few years ago by Rev. Emily Miller, but has been led for the past two years by Erin Leghorn, Director of Discipleship.

Each week, we watched one episode from Season 4 of the show which tells the story of Jesus, His disciples, and the people they meet along the way. After each episode, we had rich discussion about the episode, its themes, how the episode compares to the Bible, and how it all applies to our lives.

We look forward to this study every winter! Look for Season five coming in 2026!











Evergreens

By Elizabeth Szuba, Director of Congregational Care

The Evergreens enjoyed several wonderful events this past season. In March, Rev. Mike Creamer was our guest speaker. Most folks at our church know of Mike's love of C.S. Lewis's writing; however, few are aware that Mike was selected to present an academic paper at the International C.S. Lewis Foundation's conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland in the summer of 2025. Mike preached and illuminated C.S. Lewis's sermon, The Weight of Glory, and shared his thesis that this sermon is the key to understanding Lewis's entire body of work. We all had lots of questions and enjoyed chatting afterwards with lemonade and cookies in the Robinson room.

This Spring, Wayne Murphy, brought the ingredients and his love of cooking to the Faith House to teach the Evergreens how to make Chicken Pot Pie. Along with sous chef Annie Gensheimer, Wayne demonstrated cooking techniques, entertained the crowd, and shared how cooking helps him stay connected to family and friends. We all enjoyed his delicious pot pie and his delightful approach to cooking and entertaining. His parting words to the group were, "Have fun while you cook."

In May, the Evergreens traveled to Shadyside to visit the Rodef Shalom Biblical Botanical Gardens. Despite the rain and cold temperatures, we enjoyed touring this small but interesting gem in the city. While not many plants were in bloom, we were amazed by the variety of plants in the garden from the Old Testament. After our visit to Rodef Shalom, we enjoyed hot tea and lunch at the Cafe Carnegie before heading back to Sewickley.

Educate, Engage, Activate

By Rev. G. Michael Creamer

Over the last year there has been a lot of important work done by our mission committee. In 2025 we distributed over $195,000 in funds to 31 different organizations, and we strive to continue giving toward our partner's missions to make maximum impact financially. But in addition to financial support, our big goals over the last year have been to develop stronger relationships with all our mission partners, to understand their needs better, and to foster more relationships between them and the congregation. This has involved having each member of our committee be the point-person for multiple mission partners, getting to know the organizations and their representatives well so that we can connect them here at SPC. Simply put, our purpose has been threefold: **educate, engage, and activate**.

One of our new endeavors in 2026 was to launch our first ever "Month of Mission." The goal was to **educate** both ourselves and our congregation about the work and needs of our partners. So we invited some to come deliver a minute for mission during worship, some to speak at our adult education hour, and others to come give brief presentations during our Lenten Soup Suppers. We created an opportunity not just to learn about their work but to **engage** with our partners and build connections and relationships. Our belief was and is that if our congregation knew our partners better and built personal relationships with them, then we would be able to get more directly involved in the work they're doing.

We're pleased that as a result of these efforts, a relationship was built with our partners at the food bank and some of our members at one of our soup suppers, leading to a group of our church members going to serve for a day with them (see following article). This is why we wanted not only to educate and engage our congregation in mission, but also to **activate**—to invite you all to join in the hands on work alongside our partners.

Rich Garbee, chair of the Mission Committee, reminded us in his minute for mission back in February: *"We know everyone is busy, life is fast and intense. But for a moment, imagine if you didn't know where your next meal was going to come from, or where you were going to sleep, or where you'd get medical help from… The separation of the 'have's, have a little's, and have nothing's' is growing greater by the day. We cannot ignore it. We must help our brothers and sisters. Jesus did not see age or color or where you were born as limitations to his grace, kindness and love."* And Rich left us with Matthew 25 as a reminder of who Jesus has called us to serve.

Our work as a committee continues, and we have plans moving forward to expand on our efforts to develop better relationships with our partners. With Day on the Lawn quickly approaching, there is important work to be done. We hope you'll join us in the commitment to educate ourselves about the needs of our neighbors, to engage with them and know them up close, and to activate our church by joining in the work.





Connecting With Mission Partners

By Elizabeth Szuba, Director of Congregational Care

The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank is one of SPC's mission partners. We highlighted this community partnership during the first Lenten Soup Suppers this year. Representative Sarah Wagner shared the Food Bank's amazing work and its impact on the community. She thanked SPC for the financial support and offered several upcoming opportunities for us to directly participate in their mission.



As a result, a group of SPC members who used to gather as "The Manse" group before Covid, met at "The Market" in Duquesne in May to stock shelves and assist neighbors shopping for pantry staples and fresh produce. We enjoyed connecting with each other while meeting new people at "The Market".



Neighbors in Need

By Stephanie O'Kane

Neighbors in Need collects personal care items two months each year in February and October and distributes them to four mission partners: Sewickley Community Center, The Ladle, Center for Hope and Sewickley YMCA's Little Free Pantries. The items we collect range from hygiene items like toothpaste and deodorant to cleaning supplies like laundry detergent and garbage bags. These items are not covered by SNAP or food stamps but are essential for all of us.

Each time we collect we are amazed at the incredible support we receive from this congregation, receiving thousands of donated items. Once the collection is over, the kids join us to divvy up the items and help carry the donations to cars for distribution to our partners.

Our mission partners then distribute these items to people in our community that are struggling financially and need a bit of extra help. These donations go a long way to helping people make ends meet. Thank you to everyone who helps make this mission possible.

Amigos Ministry

By Ann Strong

The Amigos Fellowship, a group of adults with developmental challenges, has met at SPC since 1982. The group usually meets twice a month on Friday evenings. Although we always meet at the church, we often go off site for events. We love parties, so we always have parties near Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween, and Christmas. We also celebrate everyone's birthday at an Unbirthday Party. Other events include duckpin bowling, the high school musical, bingo, miniature golf, a daylong outing to Crestfield Camp and Conference Center and a cookout which we just held on the porch of 316 Beaver St. hosted by one of our Leaders, Susie Cockrell. Other Leaders include Pam and Ron Charles, John Orndorff, Becky Senior and Ann Strong.

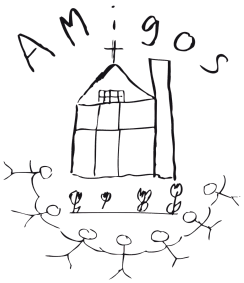
Amigos started in 1982 when a group of members interested and involved in disability issues, and parents of young people with developmental disabilities met to discuss how our church might reach out in a meaningful way to this group. The need for social interaction came quickly to the fore, and the planning group decided to try an evening social fellowship twice a month for this special group of young people. Word spread quickly among their networks, and at the first gathering on the church lawn there were seven or eight "Amigos," the name coined by Carolyn Templeton, the Director of Children's Education.

Members have come and gone over the years. We now have ten active members including some original members. We welcome new Amigos who are ambulatory, independent in self-care, able to follow simple directions, medically stable, able to communicate in some manner, and willing to participate. We also welcome church members and others who would like to be leaders. For further information about the Amigos and how you can participate, please contact Ann Strong at 412-780-3541 or any of the other Leaders.









FRIENDSHIP PRESCHOOL

By Erin Leghorn, Director of Friendship Preschool

On May 22nd, we wrapped up another wonderful school year for FriendShip Preschool! Each year, we fill our classrooms with children ages two through five. Our teachers help them learn, grow, and make friendships. This year was no exception. Though the second half of the year brought challenges in the form of closures, delays and even a leaky roof due to severe winter weather, our students still experienced all that FriendShip has to offer!

In addition to their daily classroom activities, they also welcomed special visitors to our school and went on field trips outside of school. The Pittsburgh Zoo visited again this year bringing with them a very fluffy rabbit, a tiny hedgehog, and even an armadillo! Classes also visited the Clay Café to paint plates to give as Mother's Day gifts. We continued having our monthly visits from Sewickley Public Library and ended the year with our classes walking to the library to visit Miss Bridget there. Children's Corner had their annual field day with Coach Dave who leads them through lots of fun, high-energy games. We capped off the year with our Pre-K class's end of the year performance of The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle.

At the end of the school year, we said a very bittersweet goodbye to several of our staff members:

· Mrs. Susan Fox, FriendShip I Lead Teacher, retired after 20 wonderful years in the classroom!
· Mrs. Gretchen McAdams, Co-Director, has felt a calling to return to the classroom and will be teaching Second Grade at Sewickley Academy.
· Mrs. Jessica Carlson, Pre-K Assistant, has been accepted into nursing program and will be working towards a career as an RN.
· Mrs. Danielle Nadalin, FriendShip II Assistant, will be moving on to a full-time position elsewhere.

We love all of our staff and are so sad to see these wonderful women leave us. Each of these women have big shoes to fill and it's hard to imagine FriendShip without their presence, but we are grateful for their years of service and wish them the best in their new endeavors. Fortunately, we already have some wonderful candidates for their positions and look forward to being able to announce our new staff in the near future!

We also still have a few spots left in our Children's Corner classes and our FriendShip I class for the 26-27 school year.

If you have a two-year-old or three-year-old and are looking for a preschool program for him or her in the fall, please email me at eleghorn@sewickleypresby.org for more information.













Children's Ministry

Sharing God's Love

By Nicole Quaka, Director of Family Ministries

This year's Vacation Bible School was June 8-12. The hot and humid weather was fitting for our Rainforest Falls theme where over 80 children in preschool through fifth grade explored the nature of God by taking exciting adventures around our church while growing in their relationship with Jesus. Kids enjoyed science and craft stations, Bible stories, and games all week. They even received their own Rainforest Falls Book of Psalms to take home and continue learning from once VBS is over.

From decorating, to preparing snacks, teaching stations, and leading our children to their next adventure, over 65 volunteers including 35 youth volunteers participated in VBS this year. We thank God for a beautiful week of fun and fellowship for our children and are looking forward to next year!

Children's Choir returned this year from February to April for children in third-sixth grade who met on Wednesday evenings and had several wonderful performances that they shared with our congregation. Next year's children's choir plans are already in the books and we are excited to welcome all new and returning 3rd-6th grade children to participate! We will have fall, winter, and spring sessions with many opportunities for Sunday performances. If your child is interested in the Children's Choir, please reach out to Nicole Quaka at *nquaka@sewickleypresby.org* and tell them to invite their friends!

In Sunday School, from January to May this year, SPC Kids were busy planning and creating a special Bible performance for each other. What started as an excuse to have a puppet show with newfound puppets, turned into a Bible extravaganza with both Sunday School classes performing not only for each other, but for parents, grandparents, and anyone else who found themselves in the Dining Room during the last day of Sunday School, May 17.
The preschool to 2nd grade class recited Psalm 23 with Miss Hanna complete with the most adorable hand motions. The third-fifth grade class performed a rap song to the Books of the Bible entirely with puppets. It was quite the event!

After performances by our Sunday School classes, our Children's Church graduates (third graders) received their very own special Bibles, which is a tradition that has become a rite of passage here at SPC, where graduating third graders move on from leaving the service after Children's Time to staying in and learning from our pastors in the service. The fun doesn't end when one graduates from Children's Church though. During the school year our 3rd-5th graders have their own Sunday School class at 10 am each week, opportunities to be an Acolyte, Children's Choir, special events, as well as our after-school program Club 345.

We are so proud of all of the children who performed and were recognized at our Bible Showcase, and if you missed it this year, be on the look out for next year! Our SPC Kids are curious, creative, and are always ready to share all the fun they have each year in Children's Ministries.

Sunday School is on break for the summer, but be sure to send your kids back to Sunday School at 10 am starting September 20, 2026.

Club 345 Lemonade Stand

By Marcie Coates

For months, Club 345 spent time making signs and crafts to sell at a lemonade, craft, and bake sale to raise money for Bookbags in July. They also invited family and neighbors to come support their efforts on Sunday, May 17th. Their hard work paid off as they raised $1,150!! That's a lot of backpacks!!















SPC kids





Deepening Faith

By Mike Creamer, Associate Pastor for Youth & Young Adults

Friends, it has been a journey through 2026 thus far. From Bible studies and Sunday School to Youth Hangz and mission dinners, we've made quite a few memories together already. From January til now, we have been thrilled to celebrate the continued work of our youth deacons and elders as well as other teens serving on various committees in the life of the church. More than that, on any given Sunday it is completely normal to see teens leading in our music programs at our worship services. Seeing young people in leadership roles is what being intergenerational is all about!

In February, we were grateful as always to celebrate Youth Sunday together, where junior Libby Doebler preached alongside her peers leading us in worship all morning long. We even had our middle schoolers take over the mission dinners at the Center for Hope under the leadership of Kimberly Safran, modeling what being a good neighbor means in the context of our faith. There have been games and laughter and fun, but grounding it all has been a desire to deepen our faith together. And as we look ahead to the summer together, there is more on the horizon.

Our weekly programs (like Sunday School and Youth Hangz) are on hiatus for the summer, but we have some exciting opportunities to connect and grow this summer.

You can mark your calendars now for the events below and keep an eye on the website for what's still to come!







SAVE the DATE

July

Middle School Mini Golf
July 14th | 7 PM | Scally's Golf Center

High School Surf City
July 19-24 | Mears, Michigan

Middle School Scavenger Hunt
July 22 | 5 PM | Start at Faith House

August

High School Kayaking
August 13 | 11 AM | North Park

Back to School Bash
August 30 | 5 PM | Faith House





SPC YOUTH MINISTRY



Youth Sunday







Center for Hope Dinners



Youth Tailgate



Youth Hangz

DAY ON THE LAWN RUMMAGE SALE

A Sale for Mission



DAY OF SALE

SEPT 12, 2026

We invite you to be a part of our BIGGEST mission project of the year! Last year, thanks to your generosity, we raised over $80,000. All proceeds from the sale benefit our mission partners.

Bring us your donations, volunteer your time on donation drop-off days, and on the day of the sale!

DONATION DROP-OFF DAYS

9 AM - 12 PM

July 18

August 15

September 5

BEFORE BRINGING DONATIONS:

PLEASE REVIEW OUR DONATION GUIDELINES:

www.sewickleypresby.org

WE'VE MADE A FEW CHANGES!

If you have questions, please contact the church office at *412-741-4550*.

Reach out to the DOL Leadership Team:

Andrew Birnie
310-903-9787
andrewbirnie@gmail.com

Sarah Heres
412-613-1258
ssheres@comcast.net

Doug Plocki
703-655-4870
dougplocki@gmail.com

Becky Senior
412-741-7274
beckysr6@verizon.net

DOL Webpage

Scan the QR code to view drop-off dates, volunteer opportunities, and important updates.

Lost and Found

BY DOUG PLOCKI

It was a beautiful fall day in 2022 when my family and I arrived in Sewickley Village in search of an outdoor festival, the theme of which I no longer remember. Having recently moved to the Pittsburgh area, we were eager to explore our new home. Being unfamiliar with the village—and with the parking situation as it was—we quickly lost our way. We set out in search of the festival but somehow ended up at Sewickley Presbyterian Church instead.

The SPC campus had been transformed from its usual pastoral beauty. Massive tents covered the grounds, filled with furniture, sporting goods, home goods, jewelry, toys, games, and countless other treasures. There was music, an outdoor café, and volunteers grilling hot dogs and hamburgers. The energy was contagious, and we quickly found ourselves absorbed in the festivities. We browsed the incredible selection of items, enjoyed lunch, and even purchased a new Christmas tree stand after ours failed to survive the move. The price was too good to pass up. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

At the same time, we were searching for a new church home. Based on our experience that day, we decided to visit SPC. Looking back, that decision became one of the most important moments in our lives.

The event we stumbled upon was SPC's Day on the Lawn (DOL)—a massive undertaking that raises tens of thousands of dollars each year for mission partners. Organized and staffed by dedicated volunteers, the event benefits thousands of people locally and around the world. It is not an exaggeration to say that DOL changed our lives, nor is it an exaggeration to suggest that it continues to change lives every year.

Following our DOL adventure, we began attending worship services at SPC. We met many wonderful people and felt warmly welcomed into the community long before we expressed any intention of officially joining the church. That made a profound impression on me—we were welcomed into worship and fellowship whether we joined or not.

There were many reasons we eventually became members. The sermons during worship were powerful and thought-provoking. The charges offered during the benediction challenged us to live out our faith beyond Sunday mornings. The music was exceptional, whether led by the 9 A.M. Praise Team or the choirs during the 11 a.m. service. And there was also the opportunity to give back through DOL.

Case in point: during our first Drop-off Day this year, I watched a new SPC member spend three hours carrying heavy boxes of books, antiques, and household goods from the collection site into the Chapel for storage. It was a tremendous effort, and the many people who will ultimately benefit from that work will never know the person behind it. But we saw you, Chris, and we are grateful.

This year's DOL takes place on September 12 beginning at 9 A.M. Three Drop-off Days remain: July 18, August 15, and September fifth. We still need dozens of volunteers to help with collection days, assist during the week leading up to the event, and serve in various departments on the day itself.

Interested in helping? You can volunteer here:
https://sewickleypresby.org/get-connected/events-sign-ups/day-on-the-lawn-sale-volunteers/

Whether you can give an hour or dozens of hours, your contribution will make a difference.

And if volunteering is not possible, come experience the event itself. You'll meet wonderful people and may even find the perfect piece of furniture, home décor, or sporting equipment. You may see a family furnish a college dorm room or apartment for a fraction of what it would cost elsewhere. Better yet, you may see families find quality toys, furnishings, and household necessities they otherwise could not afford. Every purchase helps support mission work that reaches even more people.

DOL is the culmination of countless hours of work by dedicated volunteers, but its impact extends far beyond a single day. The benefits are felt for months and years to come.

Our family is deeply grateful for the opportunities DOL and SPC have provided. Not only did we find a wonderful church community and deepen our relationship with God, but our son now attends Friendship Preschool and is growing up surrounded by a community of faith filled with God's love. Sometimes grateful doesn't begin to describe how we feel.

Part of this article is an appeal for help, and part of it is an invitation to experience something truly special. Your experience with DOL will be uniquely your own. I cannot say whether it will have the same profound impact on your life that it had on ours, but I am confident it will make a difference. More importantly, I can promise it will make a significant difference in the lives of many deserving people. We are called to serve—and DOL is a wonderful way to do so.

I often think about that beautiful fall day and wonder whether we simply got turned around or were gently nudged toward something amazing. I believe it was the latter. It was—and continues to be—a blessing.


HYMNS
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HYMNS
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260



More Than a Melody

By Rosie MacKenzie, Assistant Music Director of Praise Team

Contemporary worship has become an important part of church life, and with it has come the growth of praise music. This style of worship has a unique ability to lift our spirits, inspire creativity, and help us connect with God in meaningful ways.

Praise music also plays a significant role in engaging younger generations. As churches look toward the future, it is essential to create opportunities for young people to participate fully in worship. The contemporary sound, along with instruments such as guitars and drums, often resonates with younger worshipers and encourages them to become more involved in the life of the church.

One of the strengths of praise music is its simplicity and repetition. Rather than introducing many different ideas, praise songs often focus on a single truth or theme and repeat it throughout the song. While this characteristic is sometimes criticized, repetition has long been recognized as a powerful tool for learning and remembrance. Repeated phrases help God's truth take root in our hearts and minds.

Perhaps the greatest testament to the effectiveness of praise music is what happens after Sunday worship ends. A familiar chorus or lyric often finds its way into our thoughts during the week—while driving, working, or going about our daily routines. In those unexpected moments, the message of worship continues to encourage, remind, and draw us closer to God.

Praise music is more than a style of worship. It is a tool that helps us remember God's truth, engage the next generation, and carry the songs of faith with us throughout the week.





Multiplying Music

By Paul Yeater, Assistant Music Director of Choirs

It was a successful first year as our Music Ministry has evolved to meet the needs of an active, and growing, church! Opportunities for older youth and adults who wish to provide their voice in worship now include two choirs that welcome singers based on schedule and/or musical familiarity. The choirs rehearse Sunday morning each week, but sing within the service typically every other week. And yes, you can sing in both!

Begun in 2025, the Congregational Choir is an excellent option for those wishing to ensure they can attend Adult Education Hour. It's also ideal for those who wish to grow their musical experience or get into singing for the first time, or after some time away. Members of this group are eager and open to preparing thoughtful and musical augmentation to worship through a variety of musical styles.

The Chamber Choir continues to build upon the long musical legacy at SPC, engaging with pillars of the established sacred choral literature, from Renaissance motets to contemporary anthems. Individuals who are seeking to challenge themselves musically and also share their talents in additional musical events throughout the church year will be at home here.

Summer Choir continues to welcome members on a rolling basis - simply meet us in the sanctuary at 9am as you're able! Opportunities to become involved in either choir for the next program year will be announced soon. No matter your background or schedule, there's a place for you in the loft to lift your voice in praise to God!

Take Worship With You!

Stay connected to the music that inspires our worship.

Want to keep worshiping beyond Sunday morning? We've launched an SPC Worship Playlist on Spotify featuring many of the songs you hear during our worship services.

Whether you're commuting, exercising, or spending time in prayer, this playlist is a great way to stay connected to the music that helps shape our worship together.

Scan the QR code or visit the resources page on our website to start listening today.



Interested in Tech?

Looking for a meaningful way to serve at SPC? The Technology Advisory Committee is seeking new members to help support and improve the sound, video, and livestream systems that help connect our congregation each week.

No extensive time commitment is required, the committee meets just once a month for about an hour. Whether you have technical experience or simply a willingness to learn and serve, we'd love to have you join us as we help enhance worship and ministry across our church campus.

Please contact Josh Laird at *jlaird@sewickleypresby.org* if you're interested or for more information.



"This is what God the Lord says, the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it"

~ Isaiah 42:5



Sewickley Presbyterian Church
LIVE · GROW · SERVE
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www.sewickleypresby.org

Dated Material
PLEASE EXPEDITE
This newsletter is published by
Sewickley Presbyterian Church

SAVE THE DATE

Campbell/Stoner Weekend

November 7-8

Mark your calendars for a special weekend at Sewickley Presbyterian Church featuring Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton, President of Princeton Theological Seminary. A renowned scholar and dynamic speaker, Dr. Walton will lead us in an inspiring weekend centered on the theme Harmony Over Discord, with opportunities to experience worship, music, art, and meaningful conversation.

