INTERPRETATION

Sewickley Presbyterian Church
Fall Edition, 2026



Rooted in Faith. Grounded in Grace.

"Thou crownest the year with thy goodness."

Psalm 65:11

SPC STAFF

OUR PASTORS

REV. DEREK R. DAVENPORT Pastor/Head of Staff
ddavenport@sewickleypresby.org

REV. G. MICHAEL CREAMER Associate Pastor
mcreamer@sewickleypresby.org

REV. BARB KENNEDY Parish Associate
bkennedy@sewickleypresby.org

ADMINISTRATION

SHARON BARBER Assistant to the Pastor
sbarber@sewickleypresby.org

LAURA MIKUSH, CCA Business Administrator
lmikush@sewickleypresby.org

NOAH MCADAMS Interim Director of Communications
nmcadams@sewickleypresby.org

MINISTRY & PROGRAMS

FIONA CUZZOCREA Interim Jr. High Ministry Coordinator
fcuzzocrea@sewickleypresby.org

ERIN LEGHORN Director of Discipleship Ministries
eleghorn@sewickleypresby.org

NICOLE QUAKA Director of Family Ministries
nquaka@sewickleypresby.org

ELIZABETH SZUBA Director of Congregational Care
eszuba@sewickleypresby.org

MUSIC & WORSHIP

DAVE BREIT Media Engineer
dbreit@sewickleypresby.org

RICI BROCKINSON Broadcast Producer, Multi-Media Coordinator
rbrockinson@sewickleypresby.org

MICHAEL HAMMER Director of Music Ministries
mhammer@sewickleypresby.org

ROSIE MACKENZIE Asst. Music Director of Praise Team
rmackenzie@sewickleypresby.org

PAUL YEATER Asst. Music Director of Choirs
pyeater@sewickleypresby.org

ALEXIS HARTZELL Worship Technician
ahartzell@sewickleypresby.org

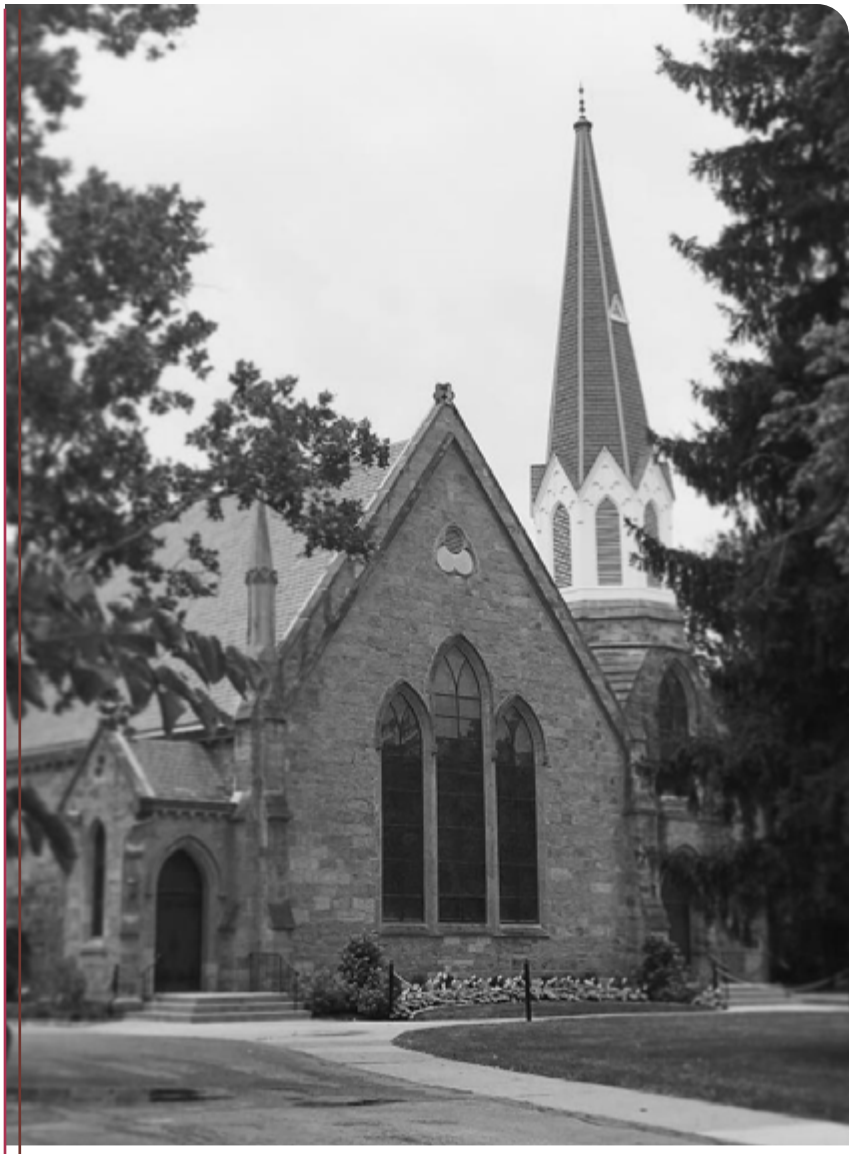
FACILITIES

JOEY TOMALES Custodian
jtomales@sewickleypresby.org

DAVID BLUM, GRETAL TOMALES
Custodians

FRIENDSHIP PRESCHOOL

ERIN LEGHORN Director of FriendShip Preschool
eleghorn@sewickleypresby.org



CONTACT SPC

Website
sewickleypresby.org

Address
414 Grant St.
Sewickley, PA 15143
412.741.4550

Office Hours
Monday-Friday
9 AM - 5 PM

SOCIAL MEDIA

WHAT'S INSIDE?

3: From Our Pastor
4: 405 Service
5: Pointing to the Cross
6: Stewardship: Built on Gratitude, Rooted in Generosity
7: Every Season has a Purpose
8-11: SPC Kids
12-13: SPC Youth
14: The Sound of Something Wonderful
15: FriendShip Preschool
16: CCM
Dollars & Sense
17: Evergreens
18: Day on the Lawn
19: Harmony Over Discord
BC: A Peak into Advent



New Beginnings, Enduring Blessings

We typically associate spring as the time of new beginnings – but you could be forgiven for thinking that it looks a lot like spring around SPC! In this *Interpretation*, you'll read about a new worship service, a new staff member, and the return of our Campbell Stoner Weekend.

We have also celebrated the conclusion of our capital campaign. Although the work continues, we have raised the pledges to fund all the projects of the campaign, which enables us to Point to the Cross together. In the months ahead we will see more upgrades to our facilities as we conclude the physical work.

This is, of course, also the time of holidays. We had bagpipes and familiar music as we celebrated Reformation Day. We remembered those that we lost this year on All Saint's Day. We are preparing for a day to give thanks and gather with family and friends. Right around the corner we are looking forward to the joy of Advent and the celebrations of Christmas.

I encourage you to pay particular attention to the calendar of events for Christmas this year. We will kick things off with an open house at the manse (I hope to see you there!) and throughout the season we will enjoy outstanding musical offerings at Word Sung and Lessons and Carols. We will remember those we love at our Longest Night Service, and then our children will lead us in our Pageant in a combined service. We will have our three Christmas Eve services and then finish up the year by defending yet another Christmas character.

There are so many reasons to be grateful here at SPC. I hope that you catch some of that excitement in this issue of interpretation. And of course, we are deep into stewardship season. Be sure to let us know how you will be part of this joyous ministry in the year ahead.

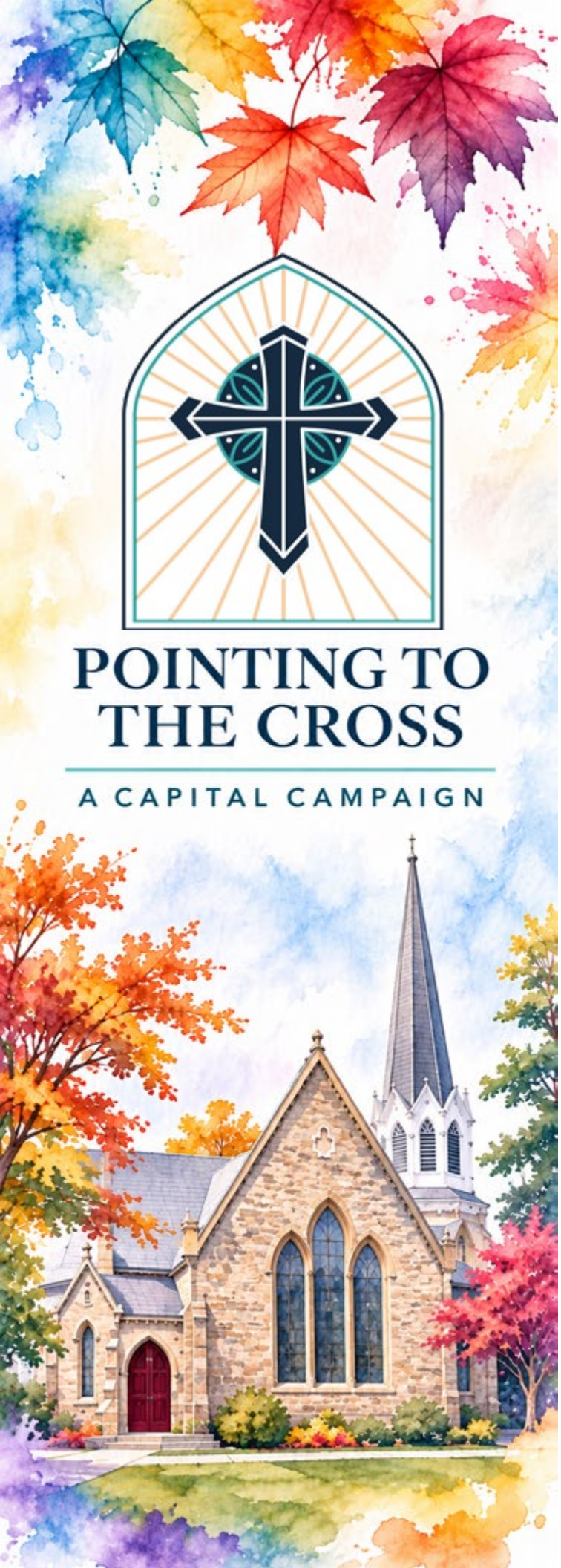
With joy,

Derek

Rev. Dr. Derek R. Davenport, Pastor



This October, we were excited to pilot a new worship experience called the 405 Service (at 4:05 PM). Our vision included simple music, teen leadership, personal testimonies, fellowship, and activities for young children. Although rain moved us indoors to the Robinson Room, the experience was wonderful! Marcie Coates shared a message about blessing, teens Anna and Dylan helped lead music alongside Rosie and Davie, and we enjoyed a meal together that strengthened our sense of community—all in just 90 minutes! We were thrilled with the response and look forward to exploring what's next for the 405. Stay tuned!



Thank You!

For I decided to know nothing
among you except Jesus Christ,
and him crucified.
I Corinthians 2:2

On behalf of our Pastoral staff and the Capital Campaign Committee, I wanted to offer my sincere thanks to all of you who so generously gave to the capital campaign. We should all be very proud for providing the financial support that is needed to make our church more accessible to everyone, safer for our staff and certainly more comfortable. As part of our commitment to extending God's love beyond our church walls, approximately $250,000 of the funds raised through the capital campaign will be directed toward mission.

We are so very grateful to all of you and we are all blessed to be members of this wonderful church family.

Mark Gensheimer
SPC Capital Campaign Member

CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

2024 | A Vision Takes Shape
The Pointing to the Cross Capital Campaign launches

2025 | Plans Become Action
The campaign moves into its construction phase, with renovations and improvements planned for the church campus.

2026 | A Milestone Worth Celebrating!
Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our congregation, all campaign funds have been raised! Construction and improvements are underway.

Looking Ahead | Building for the Future
Work continues toward creating a safer, more accessible, and more welcoming church home for generations to come.

STEWARDSHIP

"God loves a cheerful giver"



BUILT ON GRATITUDE
ROOTED IN GENEROSITY

"Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds,
and to be generous and willing to share.
In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves
as a firm foundation for the coming age,
so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

I Timothy 6 : 18-19

A firm foundation isn't built overnight. It takes time, care, commitment, and the contributions of many hands. The same is true of a church. Its strength is found not simply in its buildings or programs, but in the faithfulness of the people who call it home.

As we reflect on this year's theme, A Firm Foundation, stewardship offers us an opportunity to consider how each of us helps strengthen the church and its ministry. We often hear stewardship described in terms of time, talent, and treasure. While financial generosity is essential to sustaining the work of the church, stewardship encompasses so much more.

It's the person who quietly prepares the sanctuary before worship. The volunteer who gives an afternoon to serve a neighbor. The musician who shares a gift through song. The teacher who helps a child discover God's love. The family who makes a financial commitment because they believe in the church's mission and its future.

Each act of generosity, whether seen or unseen, becomes part of the foundation upon which the church continues to grow. And perhaps that's what makes stewardship so meaningful. It isn't simply about what we give. It's about recognizing what we've already been given and responding with grateful hearts. Our time, our abilities, our resources, and even our willingness to show up for one another are gifts entrusted to us by God.

As we approach Thanksgiving and look toward a new year, we are reminded that the foundation of our faith rests in God's unwavering love and faithfulness. Our response is to build upon that foundation through lives of service, generosity, and gratitude.

A firm foundation is strengthened by every gift, every act of service, and every heart willing to give. Together, we continue building a church where faith takes root, lives are changed, and God's love reaches far beyond our walls.

Please consider supporting our church through Stewardship giving.
Visit our website to pledge online,
or fill out a pledge card in the church office.
As always, thank you.
www.sewickleypresby.org





EVERY SEASON HAS A PURPOSE

By Jenny Valente, SPC Member

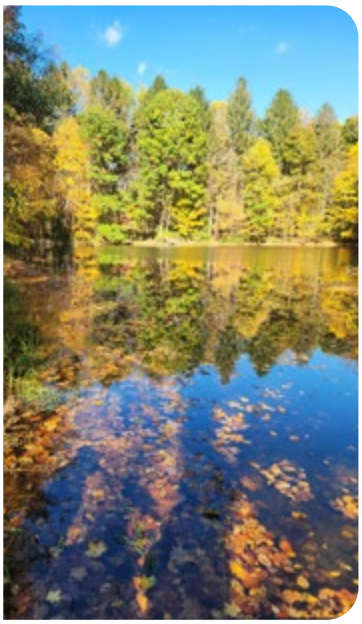
The weather was crisp and sunny, the trees were picturesque, laughter filled the space, and the ladies learned that we all have purpose in every season of life. The 2026 Women's Retreat was a success. Thirty-two women attended the retreat at Antiochian Village this year, and they all agreed that it was time well spent. We had several first-time attendees, three mother/daughter duos, and a few guests from neighboring churches.

On Saturday, Seana Scott taught us that even in the mundane tasks of life we have purpose and that God can and does use us. She helped us to see that we may not experience an immediate result, but what we do does matter. She was passionate and joyful. On Sunday, Rev. Barb Kennedy assisted us in finding our own unique spiritual gifts. She also gave a fantastic sermon on obedience. There were opportunities to have prayer, to enjoy nature, to relax and fellowship over a meal, and to praise God through song. This year we even had the chance to do chair yoga through Zoom with a YMCA Instructor.

Next year, the retreat will be a one-day event held at the church. Plan ahead now, because you are not going to want to miss out on all the fun, fellowship, and food. The Women's Retreat is a chance to allow God to fill our cup to overflowing so we can pour out His love on others all year long. Join us, you won't be sorry.











LIGHTING THE WAY

By Nicole Quaka
Director of Family Ministries

If you come to the 11 AM service, you may have seen children dressed in purple robes leading us into worship by lighting our worship candles. The Acolyte program for 3rd-6th graders is a great way for kids to serve our church in meaningful ways.

This October, our Acolyte program started off strong with an Acolyte Training where over 10 NEW Acolyte trainees learned how to lead us into worship each Sunday. There was so much buzz around the responsibility of being allowed to carry a flame at church to light our chancel candles. Want your child or grandchild to be an Acolyte? Contact Nicole -- she'd love to share the details with you!





JOIN OUR CHRISTMAS PAGEANT!

December 20, 2026 | 11 AM service

Christmas Pageant practice for our 10 AM Sunday School children started on October 11 and will run bi-weekly led by Jane and Dane Schlenke.

If your preschool-3rd grade children are interested in participating in the Pageant this year, please bring them to Sunday School from 10-10:45 AM on the following Sundays:

November 22, December 6 and 13
Children's Studios

Our 3rd-12th grade students will practice in the Dining Room on the above dates.

DRESS REHEARSALS
Saturday, December 19, 10 AM | Sanctuary
Sunday, December 20, 9:45 AM | Dining Room

Contact Nicole to take part: nquaka@sewickleypresby.org.



BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

Over 40 people from youth and children's ministries attended our Back to School Bash on August 30 to learn more about our upcoming programs and enjoy time to get to know each other. Mike and Nicole brought everyone together to pray and encourage one another before kicking off the beginning of our church year before we broke out for a potluck meal and activities together.





VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Our Children's Ministry is growing and thriving and with that growth always comes the need for more volunteers! We are so thankful that almost 30 Children's Ministry prospective volunteers attended our Volunteer Training on August 23 and 30 where they were able to fill out clearances and learn more about our mission at SPC to work with parents and families to raise their children in the faith.

Since that volunteer training we have had 15 people already volunteer in Children's Ministry, creating a space for our children that is united in vision and mission toward the Lord. We are so excited about the momentum we have right now and ask for your continued prayers for Children's Ministry and for the volunteers to keep coming! We are always in need of 4-6 volunteers on Sundays and 3-4 on Wednesdays, so it takes a lot of hands and hearts to provide what our children need.

We have been blessed with precious children and families at our church and want to continue to provide a place for them to grow in their relationship with Jesus. Thank you for your continued dedication. Keep up the good work!



CHILDREN'S CHOIR: JOIN US!

We now have Children's Choir for all ages preschool to grade 5 in Children's Ministry thanks to our amazing Children's Choir Team: Michael Hammer, Rosie Mackenzie, Peggie Hatton, Jane and Dane Schlenke.

Genesis Singers

Preschool - Grade 2
Bi-Weekly Practice on Sundays
10-10:45 AM | Choir Room

This fall semester they are working on Christmas Pageant songs. In the spring they will work on songs to perform during the service with the Alleluia Singers.

Alleluia Singers

Grades 3-6
Practice on Wednesdays
4:45-5:30 PM | Choir Room

They performed on October 11 & on November 15. Check it out on YouTube! We hope you enjoy their beautiful singing this year!



SPC KIDS' PLAYDATE

On Wednesdays* while the 3rd-6th graders are in choir, we have a fun group of preschool-2nd graders who come to our playground to build friendships at church during our SPC Kids' Playdate! This is a free play, mid-week check-in for our youngest members to grow in relationship with each other and start learning how to work together as a church family. Our next series of playdates are scheduled for January 6-February 24 in the Children's Studios! Mark your calendars and bring your littles ones!

**Wednesday Programs:* The following programs run each Wednesday during these semester blocks:

Fall: September 16 - November 18 **Winter:** January 6 - February 24 **Spring:** April 7 - May 19



Club 345 continues to grow and develop into an amazing after school program for 3rd-5th graders at our church and community thanks to our fearless volunteer organizer, Marcie McClintic Coates who co-leads Club 345 with Nicole Quaka. We currently have over 40 kids (and counting!) coming to Club 345 each week to learn how to treat others with kindness, learn about Jesus, share snacks, do mission projects, and play together.

Last week, we had 4 children follow their friends over from school to join in on the fun. It was so sweet to have the children come ask if it was okay if their friend could stay and see what it's all about. There is something about Club 345 that is hard to resist. It offers something different than any other program in this area. Kids have the independence to walk together from school and then strategically learn how to treat each other and our community with the love Jesus has for us.

Every Wednesday kids come and enjoy a healthy snack before going out on the lawn to play kickball, four square, beach ball badminton, or jump rope. Then we gather together to hear about our weekly mission partner and what our project for them will be before praying together, splitting into groups and enjoying another (more fun) snack.

So far this year, we have worked with the Pittsburgh Food Bank, YMCA, and Animal Friends. During the rest of the fall semester we are looking forward to participating in projects for the Center for Hope, Neighbors in Need, contributing to the food basket ministry hosted by our deacons and providing community outreach blessings for our neighbors, and a Cookies & Caroling event on December 21.

Club 345 is such an amazing way to plug our church into the community while planting seeds that we hope and pray will last a lifetime.

Please consider volunteering at Club 345 to help this ministry continue to thrive. Truly by the grace of God, we have not had to turn any children away because He continues to provide us with six to eight willing and loving volunteers each week. We have been so blessed with wonderful staff and volunteers who are amazing at meeting the kids where they are at with patience, joy, and the love of Christ. As cold and flu season approaches and parent volunteers are stretched thin, we could always use more regular and on-call volunteers on our team, so please consider joining us for one or (hopefully) more weeks.

We currently have over 40 kids (and counting!) coming to Club 345 each week.

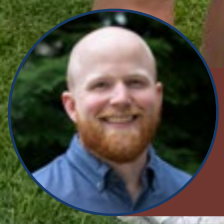
Please reach out to Nicole Quaka at nquaka@sewickley-presby.org if you are interested. In the meantime, please pray for us and this ministry as we seek to follow the Lord as He tells us:

"Let the little children come to me.
Do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven
belongs to such as these."

SPC YOUTH MINISTRY



Surf City



FROM SUMMER ADVENTURES TO FALL BEGINNINGS

By Rev. Mike Creamer
Associate Pastor for Youth & Young Adults

The summer ended on an exciting note and we have gotten back into our fall rhythms as the weather has begun to turn! We were excited to make our return to Surf City over the summer. The week was jam-packed with plenty of water tubing, spike ball, and growing in our faith through our preacher for the week. We also were happy to have two nights of worship around the fire pit for the teens led by our upperclassmen and have been excited to see them taking on more leadership in our youth ministry.

We kicked off the school year with our Back 2 School Bash, where we had a potluck dinner and yard games as we ushered in the new school year. As we have kicked things off, we have been thrilled about the return of our Confirmation Class - an opportunity we offer students to explore what the foundational beliefs of the Christian faith are throughout the program year. We have 14 students going through the process this year, and we have been having lively discussions already! Our middle school Sunday School class has been ramping up as well, exploring themes of Identity this year. Our High School Breakfast Bible Study has been going through and unpacking different doctrines of theology together and exploring how we engage with them even when we don't know it!

Finally, we are excited to announce we have hired Fiona Cuzzocrea as our Interim Jr. High Ministry Coordinator. Fiona has been in youth ministry for more than 5 years, has engaged with our group through the Pittsburgh Kids Foundation for years, has a fantastic sense of humor and a deep heart for ministry. We are excited to have her joining us this year, and we hope that you will go out of your way to introduce yourself to her and make her feel welcome!



WELCOME!

Fiona Cuzzocrea
Interim Jr. High Ministry Coordinator

High School Laurelville
November 20-22
Sign ups are full.
Please send in final payments!

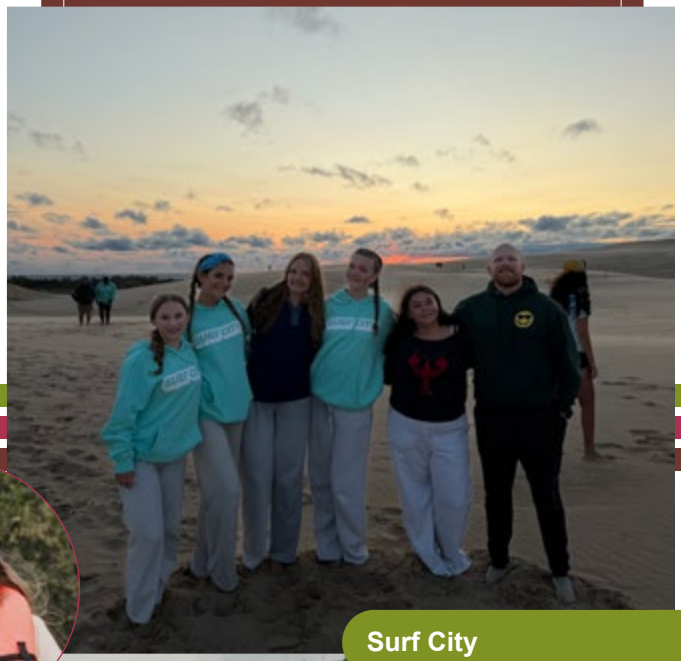
Jr. High Bingo Bash!
November 29 | 4-5:30 PM

All-Youth Christmas Party
December 20 | 4-6 PM
Meet us at the Faith House for our favorite festive event!

College Christmas Party
December 20 | 6-7:30 PM
Join us at the Gledhill's house for a college reunion this Christmas!



Sunday AM



Surf City



Surf City





THE SOUND OF SOMETHING WONDERFUL

By Michael Hammer, Director of Music Ministries

SPC's music ministry continues to expand, offering musical opportunities for all ages and skill levels. This fall, we're especially excited to welcome two children's choirs, the Genesis Singers and Alleluia Singers, providing our youngest musicians with opportunities to develop their musical gifts, grow in faith, and share their voices in worship.

On the other side of the spectrum, SPC has begun a concert series featuring classical and jazz groups, with six events planned for its inaugural year. The series opened on October 3 with Pittsburgh Symphony cellist Charlie Powers, who presented a beautiful evening of Bach Cello Suites, in which every phrase was full of meaning and humanity. The series continued on Campbell/Stoner weekend with a November 7 performance by the Thomas Wendt Jazz Quartet. Looking ahead, the next concert will be held on December 17, featuring musicians from the Pittsburgh Symphony in a Benefit for Ukraine Concert.

Recently added to the second semester is an appearance by the a cappella group the Yale Alley Cats. This group includes Jack Miller, who is now a sophomore at Yale (and SPC choir alumnus!). In February, the principal trumpet of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra will be in concert with an organist from South Korea, continuing SPC's national and international reach. We conclude in April with a string quartet concert by the Academy Quartet of Pittsburgh. More information is on our website.

We are always looking for ways to connect people with music at SPC. Both the praise team and the adult choirs have seen an increase in singers and instrumentalists in the past year. If you are looking for a way to get involved but have some questions, just ask either myself, Paul Yeater, Director of Choirs, or Rosie MacKenzie, who leads the Praise Team.

As we head into the Christmas season, our choirs will be offering Camille Saint-Saëns' beautiful Christmas Oratorio on December 13, with members of the Pittsburgh Symphony and Cathedral organist Ken Danchik. I get chills thinking about it. I hope you do, too.

It is a blessing to be at a place with so many opportunities for wonderful music making. I hope you are having a blessed season as well.





BACK TO SCHOOL!

By Erin Leghorn, Director of FriendShip Preschool

Another new school year has begun and another exciting school year is underway at FriendShip Preschool! Our classrooms are full of new and returning students. Their smiles and laughter bring us all so much joy!

We welcomed our new Children's Corner students at our annual Popsicles on the Playground get-together. Miss Ann, Miss Bethany, and I hosted our new students and their families before school started for a play date on the playground. We enjoyed putting names to faces and connecting parents with each other. We ended our time together with popsicles for everyone!

At the end of last year, we said goodbye to several of our long-time employees as they embarked on new adventures, such as nursing school, full-time careers, and retirement. We miss having them here, but in their places, we have two wonderful new teachers!

Mrs. Lindsey Russell, Pre-K Assistant
Mrs. Kelci Snyder, FriendShip II Assistant

Though we've only been in school since the beginning of September, our classes have already enjoyed Chapel Time, Story Time with Miss Bridget from Sewickley Public Library, and a visit with the Sewickley Fire Department. We also visited the Pumpkin Patch at Sewickley United Methodist Church and welcomed members of the Sewickley Police Department at the end of October.

We can't wait for the rest of the year to unfold and bring exciting new learning opportunities!









THE GIFT OF BEING THERE

By Elizabeth Szuba, Director of Congregational Care

Life is beautiful, messy, and challenging even on the best of days. It is even more difficult when life throws you a curve ball– a dire diagnosis, a surgery that zaps your strength and limits your activities, a broken relationship, the loss of a job, or the death of a loved one. When life is too much to handle, it is helpful to know that you are not alone, and there are people who will walk with you. That's the role of the Congregational Care Ministry (CCM) at SPC.

The CCM Team works in tandem with the Pastors and Deacons to connect with and support those in our church family who are going through difficult times. We pray weekly, we send cards to those who are grieving, we text and call to check in, we visit those who are homebound or in the hospital, and we plan educational and fellowship events for Evergreens. Although I have worked with CCM since its inception, I must say that it wasn't until my family's journey with hospice and my father's death this past summer that I fully appreciated the love and support of our church family. If you are in a difficult season, facing illness or surgery, and/or grieving the loss of a loved one, know that you are not alone, and we are here to walk alongside you.

CCM Team Members
Leslie Braksick
Matt Braksick
Gretchen Burnham
Pam Charles
Ron Charles
Craig Dobbins
Annie Gensheimer
Gretchen McAdams
Wayne Murphy
Jane Raymond
Beth Rom
Judee Rooney
Ann Shelton
Patricia Stover
Elizabeth Szuba
Jan Wendt











DOLLARS & SENSE

By Laura Mikush, Business Administrator

Keeping our church buildings warm, cool, and welcoming comes at a cost!

Did you know that the cost of natural gas (Columbia Gas) for 2026, year-to-date, is $11,219 for the church and $992 for Faith House? In 2025, those costs totaled $22,094 for the church and $1,899 for Faith House.

While these expenses may not be the first things that come to mind when we think about church ministry, they are an important part of maintaining the spaces where we worship, learn, gather, and serve. It's a reminder that faithful stewardship helps keep more than the lights on—it helps keep our ministries going!



SPENDING TIME TOGETHER:
NATURE, MUSIC & HISTORY

By Elizabeth Szuba, Director of Congregational Care

Evergreens kicked off the Fall season with a trip to Fern Hollow Nature Center. We were thrilled to have Naturalist Janel Morrison give a presentation on wildflower meadows. After the presentation Janal took us out into the meadow at Fern Hollow for a look at the beautiful fall hues. The Golden Rod was stunning! We are so grateful to have such beauty in our backyard, and for the expertise and connection with Janel, daughter of church members, Gary and Karen Bauer. Thank you also to Ann Shelton (CCM member) who serves on the Board at Fern Hollow and made this field trip possible.

In October, we were treated to a Halloween concert by Michael Hammer, SPC Music Director. We gathered in the church sanctuary, turned the lights down low, and had a wonderful time as Michael shared interesting details about the organ and played spooky organ music. It was great fun to immerse ourselves in both familiar music as well as music dating back to 1340 – the oldest surviving organ music. We also got a real treat when Michael shared an original piece that he composed especially for us.

To wrap up the Fall season, the Evergreens celebrated America's 250th Anniversary with a presentation and viewing of videos about the history of Fort McIntosh in Beaver, PA. Judee Rooney, a member of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) shared her love of history and the behind-the-scenes details of making educational videos about different aspects of life at Fort McIntosh. Judee's Chapter of NSDAR raised the funds and created five short videos that can be found on YouTube@fortmcintoshnasdar.



Pictured above: Judee Rooney & Ann Shelton

Day on the Lawn

A Moment of Gratitude

On September 12 we welcomed hundreds of people from near and far to shop at SPC and raised a record breaking amount of $90,000 for our mission partners! Over 200 church and community members contributed countless hours to host this amazing six hour event. It is truly a *Day for Mission* when you learn the funds will help stock food pantries, assist with those finding themselves homeless, continue providing Christian education locally and abroad, and maintaining numerous other mission efforts.

Highlights of this special day are many including witnessing all generations of our congregation working together. A handful of our Mission Partners spent the day with us, allowing a better understanding of how we raise funds for our mission giving. An unexpected positive was a result of shifting the traffic flow out of the Robinson Room as many visitors witnessed the remodeled sanctuary. People felt the calmness and the beauty our sanctuary provides, even more so in the midst of a busy and chaotic day outside the church.

The Leadership Team thanks everyone who made this important church event happen. Whether you worked a Drop Off Day, moved furniture on the Big Move, flipped burgers, sold lemonade, provided style ideas in jewelry, baked cookies, lifted and unpacked boxes, perhaps sorted glasses, antiques, books or coffee makers, your help was invaluable. As everyone knows, this event is a significant undertaking. We are forever grateful of your time, money and energy to proudly state DOL 2026 was a success!

By Andrew Birnie, Sarah Heres, Doug Plocki & Becky Senior DOL Leadership Team 2026

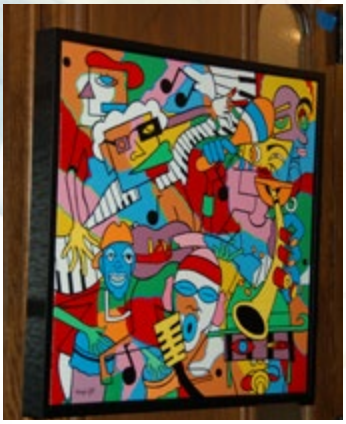














An Inspiring Weekend of Faith, Music, Art, & Connection

In a world where differences often divide us, how do we find common ground? How do we listen, embrace our shared humanity, and live out our faith in ways that bring people together rather than push them apart?

These questions were at the heart of *Harmony Over Discord,* the theme of the 2026 Campbell Stoner Weekend, November 7–8. Through thought-provoking messages, inspiring music, meaningful art, and opportunities for fellowship, the weekend invited us to consider what it means to be a community rooted in faith, compassion, and love.

Faith in a Divided World

This year's featured guest, Rev. Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, brought a timely perspective to the weekend's theme.

In his Saturday evening keynote address, Christian Formation in the Age of Algorithms, Dr. Walton explored the challenges of living faithfully in a culture increasingly shaped by technology, ideological divisions, and outrage. His message invited reflection on how Christian communities can resist the pressures of division and instead cultivate humility, empathy, worship, and neighborly love. Along the way, he even shared his love of music and lyrics, bringing a little levity and a personal touch to an otherwise thought-provoking conversation.

On Sunday morning, Dr. Walton returned to the pulpit with his sermon, Beloved before Becoming, continuing the weekend's exploration of Christian identity and the importance of grounding our lives in God's love.

Finding Harmony Through Music and Art

The weekend's message extended beyond the spoken word.

Saturday evening featured the Thomas Wendt Jazz Quartet, bringing together four talented musicians whose performance offered a fitting expression of the weekend's theme. Jazz, with its interplay of individual voices, improvisation, and collaboration, reminds us that harmony doesn't require everyone to sound the same. Instead, something beautiful can emerge when we listen to one another.

Music also enriched Sunday's worship service, with guest vocal soloists Marianne Cornetti and Anna Singer.

Art provided another opportunity for reflection through A New Canvas, a special exhibition featuring works created, loaned, or donated by SPC members and friends. Paintings, photography, sculpture, stained glass, mosaics, fabric works, and children's art offered different perspectives on peace, perseverance, faith, and reconciliation.

At the center of the exhibition was The Return of the Prodigal, a bronze sculpture by acclaimed artist and author Charlie Mackesy, OBE. Its imagery of reconciliation and unconditional love provided a meaningful connection to the weekend's message.

A Message to Carry Forward

Perhaps the most important part of Harmony Over Discord is what happens after the weekend ends.

The conversations we have, the kindness we extend, and our willingness to listen to someone whose experiences or opinions differ from our own are all opportunities to put our faith into practice.

Harmony does not mean the absence of disagreement. It means choosing compassion over judgment, understanding over division, and love over fear.

As we continue to grow together as a church family, may the message of Harmony Over Discord remind us that our firm foundation is not found in always agreeing with one another, but in the love of Christ that holds us together.

Sewickley Presbyterian Church
LIVE · GROW · SERVE
414 Grant Street | Sewickley, PA | 15143
www.sewickleypresby.org

Dated Material
PLEASE EXPEDITE

This newsletter is published by
Sewickley Presbyterian Church

A Peek into Advent

A season of waiting, a promise of hope,
and the joy of Christ's coming.



Davenport Family Open House at the Manse
Tuesday, December 9, 5-8 PM

Lessons & Carols
Sunday, December 13, 9 AM

Word Sung
Sunday, December 13, 11 AM

Light in the Darkness Service
Wednesday, December 16, 7 PM

Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 20, 11 AM

Youth Christmas Party
Sunday, December 20, 4 PM

Christmas Eve Services
4 PM, 6:30 PM, 9 PM

Final Worship Service of 2026
Sunday, December 27, 10 AM