



The Rolling Stone

LENT 2023

Bless This Lent

40 Days to Reflect, Pray, and

Bless our Imperfect Lives

Lent is a time for us to wrestle with the fullness of who we are as humans – fragile and frail, broken and dusty. It is also a time to wrestle with the fullness of who God is – the one who sits and takes on the dust and makes beautiful things out of it, **including us.** It mirrors Jesus' own journey in the wilderness, whereby we, too, make our way into the thick of gospel narrative that will inexorably and invariably lead to the cross.

This year, we will draw inspiration from Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie's book *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Day* for our Lenten journey with each other and with Jesus. Kate Bowler writes "Lent is an incredible moment for the spiritual honesty we are practicing here. Together, we're going to bless the days we have, while longing for the future God promised when there will be no tears, no pain, **no email.**" Each week we look at what might be a peculiar blessing, but in the vein of the blessings Jesus offered in the Beatitudes. Examples include blessings for the imperfect, the curious, the suffering ones, the lonely and more.

We are providing a variety of ways to enter into this Blessed Lent season and these odd and wondrous blessing for our imperfect lives. Devotionals will be provided. Although there will be a few printed versions available at request, we invite you to utilize the online option as each day features supplemental links to scripture, music and podcasts. Worship will incorporate these blessings as part of our pastoral prayers, as well as unpacked in our weekly sermons.

I invite you to begin Lent with our Ash Wednesday worship on February 22nd at 7pm, where we will remember that we are dust and to dust we will return but also the promise that God goes with us in our all our dusty-ness. Simple, meditative music will draw us in to this holy day of penitence and forgiveness. Offering our broken pieces in a prayer station followed by the imposition of ashes will complete our service.

As we journey later in the season to palm, passion and the empty tomb, we will celebrate the climax of the Jesus story with the

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triumphal entry on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday Meal (6pm) and Worship (7pm), Good Friday Service of Word and Music Reflection (7pm) and the celebration of Easter at one service at 10:30 am.

Indeed, may we all have a Blessed Lent!

Pastor Jessica

Save the Date!
Sunday, April 16th
Serve Sunday
Where we exchange our worship for service!



Plan to join us for a hot breakfast and then serve your community with a full belly and an open heart!

Various service opportunities will be available, with something available for all ages and abilities. Projects will support our own SMPC community, as well as the White Oak community at large.



NEW DIRECTORY In our ongoing efforts to improve communications, we have been auditing our directory information. Thanks to all who filled out the family data update in the fall. An updated directory will be available to all by March 1st. In the meantime, if you are not sure you updated the church office with any changes in **your family's contact information**, please fill out this [online form](#) as soon as possible.



Bless This Lent

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Lenten Sermon Series

Ash Wednesday – February 22, 2023/Imposition of Ashes

Scripture: Psalm 51

“Blessed Are the Fragile”

1st Sunday in Lent - February 26, 2023

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11

“Blessed Are the Imperfect”

2nd Sunday in Lent – March 5, 2023/Communion

Scripture: John 3:1-17

“Blessed Are the Curious”

3rd Sunday in Lent – March 12, 2023

Scripture: Romans 5:1-11

“Blessed Are Those Who Suffer”

4th Sunday in Lent – March 19th, 2023/Fellowship Sunday

Scripture: Psalm 23

“Blessed Are Those Who Feel Alone”

5th Sunday in Lent – March 26th, 2023

Scripture: John 11:1-45

“Blessed Are Those Who Mourn”

Lenten Devotional

Lenten Devotionals will be available online as a daily email. If you would like to receive your devotional in your email inbox, and have not previously received them electronically, please contact Jo at

jo@sampsonsmills.org or 724-664-6295

Facility Rentals Remember that the Fellowship Hall may be rented for private events such as birthday parties and showers. In addition, we are looking to partner with more local non-profit organizations, whom we can offer rental discounts to. If you or someone you know is looking for a simple, efficient event space for a family gathering or group meeting, please have them contact the church office.

Staff Schedule Reminder

Pastor Jessica takes sabbath on Fridays & Saturdays.

Jo takes sabbath on Saturdays & Mondays.

Amber takes sabbath on Saturdays & Sundays.

Please remember our regular church office hours are 9:30am-1:30pm, Monday-Friday.



Upcoming Vendor & Craft Show

Saturday, March 18, 2023 from 10am-2pm



Spread the word! Scheduled Vendors/Crafters Include

AMM Handcrafted Greeting Cards

Paperpie- Usborne Books

Baby Love- Fleece & Flannel Blankets

Primitive Home Decor

Color Street Nails

Punchbowl Design- 3D Prints

Floriology

Purse Lady

Hand Designed Wreaths & Hair Bows

Quaint Lee Marie- Vintage & Retro Clothing

Handmade Chocolates

Reitz's Just Flags

Jewelry Designed by Sharon Kengle

Scentsy

Mae Street Designs

Tastefully Simple

Mary & Martha



Music Ministry

We give thanks for everyone who contributed to our musical offerings throughout Advent and Christmas and look forward to an equally musical Lent and Easter season! You can look forward to our eclectic and diverse music continuing to shine over the coming months. We will have the choir, bell choirs, and many solos and small ensembles. The more the merrier, so if you would like to get involved with music at Sampson's Mills, email Jo at jo@sampsonsmills.org



Donating Your *Required Minimum Distribution*

Did you know? It is an IRS law that you must take a *Required Minimum Distribution* from your IRA or 401K by April 1st the year after you turn 72.

To maximize the benefit of your *Required Minimum Distribution*, consider donating this to the church. As a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, **Sampson's Mills** reaps the benefit of 100% of the donation. If you retain the *Required Minimum Distribution* for personal use, you may pay up to a third of it to the IRS, depending on your tax bracket. Itemize your deductions, and you are able to claim the charitable donation. [Click here for more information from Charity Navigator on maximizing your required minimum distribution through charitable giving.](#)

The Stewardship and Finance Team



GOODS IN KIND

Donating specific items for use in the kitchen, for E.P.I.C. or another event? If you'd like a receipt for your donation of "goods in kind", please be sure to contact office/communication manager, Amber Keefer at sampsonsmillspc@verizon.net or 412-678-5355.

	Envelopes	Online
December	\$13,477	\$4,787.11
January	\$7,831	\$4,080.05
February (thru 02-19)	\$7,956	\$5,049.34



Having issues with the online giving portal? Contact the Presbyterian Foundation for help by calling 1-800-858-6127 or email clientservices@presbyterianfoundation.org



What is Faith Formation?

What is Faith Formation? And how is it different than Christian Education? Within the last couple of years, our Christian Education Team has adopted the new name of “Faith Formation Team”...and with good reason.

Faith is not learned like math or science. Faith is not blindly reciting Bible verses or memorizing the books of the Bible in order. True faith in God is a way of life and it is only acquired through experience. Faith is developed over time and at a different pace for everyone. Faith is learning who you are and to whom you belong. Faith is living in the kingdom of God right here on earth.

So how do we “teach” faith at Sampson’s Mills? We start how Jesus did: by meeting people where they are. At Sampson’s Mills, we welcome everyone. Yes, EVERYONE.

We provide a warm, welcoming environment that aims to show the worshipper that they belong to God and are safe to explore and grow their faith with us.

When an adult enters our sanctuary or joins us online, they bring with them a variety of past church experiences. Our job is to simply be a place of hospitality and love. When a teenager joins us, they also bring experiences, memories, and perceptions. But what about children? What about our youngest brothers and sisters in Christ who have had little to no church experience yet?

We are very intentional with how we encourage Faith Formation with our youngest worshippers. On a weekly basis, we provide coloring and activity sheets that correspond with the sermon theme. These pages are available while the kids are in the pews and are also available on our website for those worshipping online. Then during Small Talk, we talk about the scripture in a new and creative way that is geared to their age. **On most Sundays, the kids then go upstairs for Children’s Worship, where they have a lesson and activity that helps them grow in their faith. These routine things are intended to help children feel welcome and wanted at Sampson’s Mills every week.**

Aside from our weekly provisions for children, we also are very intentional with their experience of the sacraments and special occasions within the church. They get a front row seat when we have a baptism because we want to show them what baptism looks like and means. We also intentionally keep them downstairs for the whole service when we share in communion. There is no requirement for taking communion. Pastor Jessica explains each time what the rituals mean and welcomes *everyone* to the table of grace. As children experience communion over and over again, they learn and feel the intensity of what the bread and cup represent. They realize **that communion isn’t about us qualifying to partake... because none of us ever will...but it is about accepting the love God has for us and appreciating the grace bestowed upon us time and time again.**

As our children get older, they go through confirmation class where they have a chance to ask the hard questions and explore their own faith in a formal setting. This is where they

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start to see their own responsibility in the kingdom of God and how God can and will use them. Once confirmed, our kids get an opportunity to be on the other side of that communion plate. They can now serve communion and immerse themselves in the experience of sharing God's grace with their church family. This is a really beautiful experience and transition.

Our kids and teenagers are also welcome to take part as worship leaders in many other capacities. Some like to be greeters, some like to collect offering, some sing in the choir, some hold the communion cup baskets, some read liturgy, and some even get involved with the technological end of worship by running power point, sound, and livestream. All of these opportunities help children and teens realize that there IS a place for them at church and that Sampson's Mills will continue to be their welcoming home as they grow. The more we, as adults, can do to encourage our young worshippers in their faith journey and church experience, the richer it will be. I encourage you to pay attention to what God is doing through our young people. If they continue to feel welcome and comfortable at Sampson's Mills, we have a very bright future ahead!



Wednesdays

5:30pm-7:30pm

For more details, see
sampsonsmills.org

EPIC is back in full swing for the spring and will continue through March 29th. So far this semester, we have made Valentines for our shut-ins, cards for our police officers in McKeesport and White Oak, and have created a new tablecloth for our communion table that will be displayed on Ash Wednesday.

It is a true joy to watch God's children of all ages work together on these projects.

Everyone is welcome at EPIC Wednesdays 5:30pm to 7:30pm. See Jo to get involved!





Fellowship Sundays: a new initiative from our Cultivate Community Team

Our first Fellowship Sunday on February 12th
was a great success!

A big thank you to our Cultivate Community Team for this
new initiative.

This informal fellowship in the Narthex following worship will be hap-
pening about once a month. We have a growing congregation, and
this is a great way to connect with people both familiar and new. On
these Sundays, plan to stay just a few minutes after worship to enjoy
a treat and conversation.

Fellowship Sundays will also be...Name Tag Sundays!
On these occasions, please wear a name tag to help all feel
welcome, and help everyone put names to faces.



Milestone Anniversaries

We wish a very happy anniversary to Al & Marlene Riebel, who marked 50 years of
marriage last month!

And happy anniversary to Jon & Nancy Sylvander, who celebrated 60 years of
marriage last week!



Jon and Nancy with Rev. Irey,
following their ceremony here at
Sampson's Mills.



Al & Marlene, celebrating at the
Chart House in Longboat Key.

CUPBOARD STRETCHERS MINISTRY /

WHITE OAK FOOD PANTRY

First and foremost , we really appreciate the support we received from the congregation on our Souperbowl Sundays! Our families will be very happy with the amount and variety of soup we will be able to distribute on February 17th. Close on the heels of the soup drive are two more ways of supporting those in need through the food bank. Lent is an excellent time to reflect on our blessings and how we might be able to help others. Every Sunday we will place a grocery cart outside so that you can place food and non-food items there, just as you did during advent. Some will be distributed on March 17th, and the rest in April. The second way you can help will create an even greater impact. You can help a family buy a ham for Easter by donating \$15 to our food bank to help defray the cost of the gift cards we have to purchase. You can place it in the offering plate in an envelope marked **“foodbank” or drop it off in the office.** Our neighbors are counting on us! We are so grateful for the opportunity that God has given us to help our neighbors, and we pray that He continues to Bless our ministry.

Blessings,
Jolene (co-coordinator)

Next Distributions

Friday, March 17th

Friday, April 21

To volunteer contact Jolene Keefer

Call or text: 724-396-0977

Email: Jpkeefer@comcast.net

40 days 40 food items

Not sure what to give up for Lent? Try taking on something new instead!

Similar to the popular Reverse Advent Calendar concept, each day put aside an item for our Cupboard Stretchers ministry. Drop off what you have collected each week in the narthex.

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Peanut Butter | 23. Canned Corn |
| 2. Jelly | 24. Baked Beans |
| 3. Canned Meal
(ex: Chef Boyardee) | 25. Granola Bars/Protein Bars |
| 4. Canned Chicken | 26. Water |
| 5. Pasta | 27. Coffee |
| 6. Canned Spaghetti Sauce | 28. Toilet Paper |
| 7. Cereal | 29. Pop Tarts |
| 8. Oatmeal | 30. Instant Mashed Potatoes |
| 9. Canned Green Beans | 31. Microwave Meals
(ex: Compleat meals) |
| 10. Canned Pineapple | 32. Crackers
(ex: Saltine or Ritz) |
| 11. Canned Carrots | 33. Cornbread Mix |
| 12. Applesauce | 34. Juice Boxes |
| 13. Rice | 35. Protein Drink
(ex: Ensure) |
| 14. Canned Mandarin Oranges | 36. Tooth brush |
| 15. Canned Tuna | 37. Toothpaste |
| 16. Juice | 38. Bath Soap |
| 17. Flour | 39. Shampoo |
| 18. Sugar | 40. Antiperspirant |
| 19. Macaroni & Cheese | |
| 20. Hearty Soup | |
| 21. Chicken Noodle Soup | |
| 22. Hamburger Helper | |

EASTER FLOWERS

All selections are \$10 each.

Easter Lily, Hyacinth (blue or pink) and Tulips (red or yellow)

A list of honored/memorialized names will be on the Easter slideshow and in the next newsletter.

If you would like to purchase Easter plants for our display, please complete the online form [HERE](#). If unable to go online, please fill free to fill out the form below and submit to the church office or place in the offering plate.

To pay for your plants, please be sure to mark your envelope with “Easter Flowers” or pay online by using the **“Payment”** option in our [online portal](#).

Your name: _____

(as it will appear on the list)

Phone: _____

Easter Lily Quantity _____

Hyacinth– BLUE Quantity _____

Tulips– RED Quantity _____

Hyacinth– PINK Quantity _____

Tulips– YELLOW Quantity _____

TOTAL QUANTITY of FLOWERS : _____x \$10 = Total Cost of :\$_____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____



orders due by March 6th



HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday– April 2nd at 10:30am

Communion & Fellowship Sunday

Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

“Blessed Are the Rejected”

Maundy Thursday– April 6th

6pm Stew Meal/7pm Worship with Communion

“Blessed is the Table and the Cross”

Good Friday– April 7th at 7pm

Reflections in Music and Word

Scripture– John 19:16-42

“Blessed Are Those Who See it Clearly”

Easter– April 9th at 10:30am

Scripture– John 20:1-18

“Blessed Are Those Who Hope Still”

Sampson's Mills Presbyterian Church
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White Oak, Pa 15131

Phone: 412-678-5355
Email: sampsonsmillspc@verizon.net
Website: sampsonsmills.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Sampsonsmillspresbyterianchurch>

Worship 10:30 am

Streaming Online

Rev. Jessica McClure Archer

Like Us on Facebook!



[Facebook.com/sampsonsmillspresbyterianchurch](https://www.facebook.com/sampsonsmillspresbyterianchurch)

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR
You Tube
CHANNEL

<https://sampsonsmills.org/youtube>

Bible Study with Pastor Jessica
Wednesday at 11:00 am

The ladies meet for breakfast
first Monday of each month 9:00 am
Denny's in North Versailles.

The men meet for breakfast
first Tuesday of each month at 8:30 am
Denny's in North Versailles.

The Millers Daughter's Book Club
third Tuesday 6:30 pm
(for more details contact Linda
Lawrence)

The Food Bank
third Friday of every month
Volunteers and donations always
welcome.