



The Rolling Stone

LENT 2024

I've always been more team Easter than Christmas, even as a child. I don't really know why, but I guess it has to do more with the fact that there is **nothing that I can do for Easter's coming.** I remember watching my mom's stress in stretching the budget for gifts and churning out the pumpkin rolls

and nut rolls she'd pass on to teachers and neighbors as gifts at Christmas. I still feel that stress barometer rise because of the seemingly high expectations that come around at Christmas. Though I have been one to preach a sermon or two that our preparations are really for naught since Jesus comes whether the tree is trimmed, dinner is done and every item from our to-do list is ticked off. This only proves the adage the sermon is really the one the preacher needs to hear the most.

Easter is about showing up. Sure, we could gussy ourselves up with our Easter finest, but the whole point is about coming alongside the woman and seeing for ourselves that blessedly, again, the tomb is empty. In fact, Holy Week is just the same. Showing up among the crowds with our palms and hosannas. Showing up at the table with Jesus as he gathers his special friends for one last meal. Showing up and offering our feet to be washed and to hear again how there is no love greater than this. Showing up and joining the jeers of the crowd of Good Friday. Showing up to see the denial, the **betrayal, the desertion and secretly hoping we wouldn't do the same.** Showing up at the foot of the cross and see indeed how much he loves us.

My favorite thing to do when I was a college student was to take my grandma to church for holy week. The little churches near us would come together and do Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Sunrise Service together. I loved the rhythm and ritual that it provided, and as I sat in the pew and sang those familiar hymns, I was entering this old story and yet, quite possibly hearing it like it was new.

Certainly, on the other side of the pulpit back then, it was easier, but I still find this to be true. There's not much you can really add to these kinds of services. Just tell the story, and it winds up being more than enough. Our showing up to bear witness to the table, basin and towel, the crown and the cross, the while-it-was-still-dark surprise is all that is really required.

So far this Lent we have met some unique and surprising folk who end up as witnesses to Jesus when he is on the cross. What has most delighted me is discovering how the most unlikely people end up being the ones who get Jesus. The ones that should be scattered and are out denying to even have known him. It is the one who hangs with Jesus on his own cross that can see Jesus for who he really is. **It is the centurion, conscripted to be Rome's executioner, that offers a confession of faith.** So this begs the question - What more can God do for you and me when we find ourselves showing up this Easter?

Friends, the story is old and its contours and shapes as familiar for many of us like our living room's easy chair, but let's show up and be wrapped up in it, perhaps like we are hearing it for the first time. Let's really wave that palm branch. Let's lift up our hosannas. Let's break bread and share the cup. Let's come close to Jesus and experience the rumble of the earthquake when everyone thought it was finished. Let's wait and wonder, will this Easter still do its thing. Let's tip toe into the garden and see for ourselves the tomb is yet, blessedly, empty again.

Blessed Lent and Holy Week,

Pastor Jessica



HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday– March 24th at 10:30am

Confirmation & Fellowship Sunday

Maundy Thursday– March 28th

6pm Stew Meal/7pm Worship with Communion

Good Friday– March 29th at 7pm

Reflections in Music and Word

Easter– March 31st at 10:30am

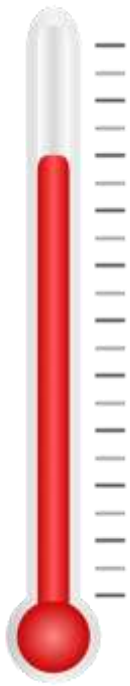
Traditional Service with Brass Ensemble

Looking Ahead.....Save the Date

April 6th-7th

A Weekend of Service for our Community!





PER CAPITA

Per Capita Contributions support our local, regional and national Presbyterian leadership. Please make every effort to make your own Per Capita contribution!

What is not fundraised, must come from the operating budget.

As of 2/29/24, we are only 9 member contributions from reaching our budgeted goal!

Giving Snapshot

	Envelopes	Online
December	\$23,827	\$3,445
January	\$7,080	\$5,100
February	\$9,018	\$3,305

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

Meditation Garden Bricks

Would you like to put a brick in the Meditation Garden?
It's a great way to honor someone special or to memorialize a loved one.

The cost of the engraved brick is just \$20.

[Click here to order](#) or call Rich Peters at 412-678-3719.

Bricks are engraved with up to 13 characters (including spaces and punctuation) per line, with up to 3 lines per brick.



UPDATED DIRECTORY

The updated directories are now available! To request a copy, please email office@sampsonsmills.org and indicate if you would prefer a printed hardcopy or a digital copy.

Regular church office hours are

9:30am-1:30pm, Monday-Friday

Pastor Jessica takes sabbath on Fridays & Saturdays.

Jo takes sabbath on Saturdays & Mondays.

Amber takes sabbath on Saturdays & Sundays.

Love & Serve Jesus Christ



Music Ministries

It's never too late to join the Choir or Bell choir! We would love to have you!

Bell Choir meets on Thursdays at 6pm in the sanctuary.

Vocal Choir meets on Thursdays at 7pm in the choir room.

For more information, contact Jo at jo@sampsonsmills.org



Tech Team Volunteers

Are you more of a "behind the scenes" person? Do you enjoy using technology? We are looking for more people to train on running sound, powerpoint and livestream. Anyone with an interest is welcome to join the tech team.

Contact Jo at jo@sampsonsmills.org to get involved!



Liturgists Needed!

Strong voices are needed every Sunday to help lead worship. If you are not a singer, but would like to read liturgy and scripture, we have a place for you! [Contact Jo](#) to get on the liturgist schedule. *New voices are ALWAYS welcome!*



Children's Worship and Nursery Care are available every week except for communion weeks (1st Sunday of each month).

- *Children ages 3 and under* are invited for nursery care upstairs for the duration of the service.
- *Children ages 4 through 4th grade* are invited upstairs following Small Talk for a Bible lesson and activity.

If you are interested in volunteering for either of these ministries, please [contact Jo](#).

Faith Formation News



EPIC Wednesdays will be wrapping up on March 20th with our EPIC Family Picnic. It's been a wonderful EPIC Season and we're all looking forward to bringing it back in the fall!

This intergenerational ministry is great for ALL AGES. For more information, visit sampsonsmills.org/epic.



To celebrate Valentines Day, our EPIC participants explored ways to show God's love to our neighbors with a Love & Serve Mission Party!

Our older students researched local non-profits that specifically serve youth populations. They then planned to create 3 different types of care kits to target the needs of each chosen non-profit. With tremendous support from the congregation donating items from the project list, over 100 care kits were assembled by all the EPIC participants from the young to the young at heart!

36 hygiene kits. 48 kid activity kits. 30 birthday cake kits.

These were all distributed to Auberle, Womanspace and Family Center, all of McKeesport. In addition, 100th birthday cards were made for a special friend of the congregation, as well as valentine cards made to serve as random acts of kindness.



Cultivate Community

Election Day Soup Sale

Our semi-annual soup sale is coming up on Primary Day, *Tuesday, April 23rd!* While polls open at 7am that day, our soup sale will begin at 8am and continue until we are sold out! Help us reach our goal of 100 quarts sold!



Church Choirs Unite!

Mark your calendar for *Sunday, April 28th at 3pm at Mary, Mother of God St. Angela Parish*. Our SMPC Choir will be joining with the choirs of Mary Mother of God and McKeesport Shared Ministries for a celebration of music! This choir concert will be a wonderful collaboration of voices singing praise to the Lord!



Mon Yough Chorale



The Mon Yough Chorale Christmas concert was held on Sunday, December 10th. Many members and friends of SMPC sing with the chorale and we love to partner with this organization. If you know anyone who is looking for a choral group to sing with, rehearsals are Sundays at 7pm in the fellowship hall. All voice types welcome! Be sure to mark your calendars for their June 9th concert, held right here at SMPC!



Upcoming Vendor & Craft Show

Saturday, March 23, 2024 from 10am-2pm



Quarts of homemade soup, chili & haluski will also be for sale.

Spread the word! Scheduled Vendors/Crafters Include

Baby Love- Fleece & Flannel Blankets

Paper Pie- Usborne Books

Brittany's Plants

Primitive Home Decor

Door Décor & More

QLM- Beads & Tees

Home Chocolates by Rita

Scentsy

Jewelry Designed by Sharon Kengle

Sugar Cookies & More

Just Flags

Tastefully Simple

Norwex

Tumblers/DNA Crafts



Sampson's Mills is planning a blood drive!

To schedule a date for a spring drive, we need to demonstrate interest from at least 20 people by March 10th! Sign up in the narthex or online here <https://forms.gle/YUSXyhKYWXTGQZtd7>



The White Oak Lions Present

I Loathe Lucy

Mystery Dinner

Saturday May 4th

at **Sampson's Mills**

Doors Open 5:30pm

Dinner Served 6:30pm

Mystery Show 7:30pm

For tickets, call your local White Oak Lion,
Rich Peters at 412-678-3719

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!

Call 412-678-5355 or

[fill out an inquiry form here.](#)



Empower our Neighbors

CUPBOARD STRETCHERS MINISTRY / WHITE OAK FOOD PANTRY

Gratitude: for our cheerful, ready volunteers preparing items for shopping and interacting with clients on distribution day, for food donations stacked up from our concerned and generous congregation, for tables piled with products ready to be chosen by food recipients, for a church that houses our community outreach ministry, for our faithful pastor and youth/music director who deliver to shut-ins, and most of all, to our Lord and Savior who is always with us, helping us to navigate this challenging endeavor.

The most immediate needs are two-fold: to bolster our inventory for March's distribution and monetary donations so that we can provide \$20 gift cards because it is the last one before Easter.

To meet the need for food, instead of giving up something for Lent (or in addition to), why not give away a food or non-food item most days and bring them to the church on a Sunday or during office hours? The monetary donation can be any amount. We are so grateful for your unfailing support!

Blessings, Jolene

FEATURED NEEDS OF THE MONTH:

To volunteer, contact

Jolene Keefer

Call or text: 724-396-0977

Email: jpkeefe@comcast.net

Cans of Pineapple/Mandarin Oranges

Cake Mixes

Cereal

Laundry Detergent

Next Distributions

Friday, March 15th

Friday, April 19th

Friday, May 17th

Mr. Rogers Day is March 20th! Love your neighbor like Mr. Rogers! Donate to the foodbank, spread the word about kindergarten registration, or mark your calendar for our weekend of service activities April 6-7th.



"FRANKLY, THERE ISN'T ANYONE
YOU COULDN'T LEARN TO LOVE
ONCE YOU'VE HEARD THEIR STORY."

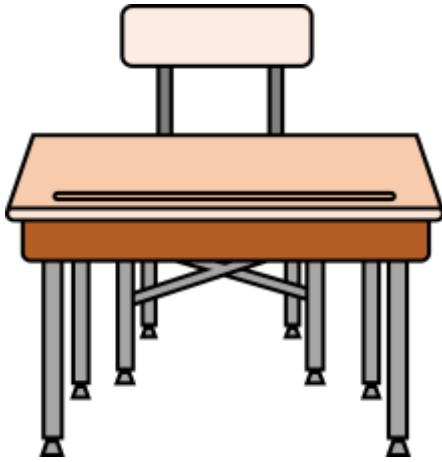
-FRED ROGERS



presbyterianmission.org/resource/a-beautiful-day-in-the-neighborhood-mr-rogers-day/



Our Neighbors at McKeesport Area School District....



Francis McClure is holding a career day in April! Call the school if you are willing to volunteer to chat with students about what you do and how you got there!
412-664-3613

Contact your state legislators to support House Bill 640 and Senate Bill 610, "One Certified Librarian per Public School".

Did you know that more than 54 Pennsylvania public school districts are without any school librarians? This impacts more than 100,000 K-12 public school students, including students here in our own community. School libraries staffed by certified school librarians provide the depth and breadth of reading materials that a classroom library can't, meeting every child's literacy needs at all reading levels and languages. They help teach students to evaluate information they read, see, or view, learning to distinguish reliable and trustworthy information from misinformation and fake news.

For more details, check out

www.psla.org/pa-library-legislation



If you require assistance, please call 412-664-3700 or email enrollment@mckasd.net.
If you need to access a computer, please visit us at our Administration Building at
3590 O'Neil Blvd. McKeesport, PA 15132.

McKeesport Area School District

Kindergarten Registration 2024-2025

Kindergarten Registration for the 2024-2025 school year is now open! Please follow the instructions below to register. All registrations will be completed online.

Spread the word!
Kindergarten registration is now open! Help make sure all 5 year olds are in school this fall!

Meet Our Confirmands!

These teens have been meeting since January and working with their mentors as they learn more deeply about their faith.

Their time together included many mornings delving into Adam Hamilton's *Creed*, and an afternoon of service connecting with homebound members of the congregation.



Dane J. Butker

8th grade at Norwin
Middle School

Favorite subject: Math

Extra-curriculars/Interests:
Science



Alice Delose

7th grade at Norwin
Middle School

Favorite subject: ELA

Extra-curriculars/Interests:
Reading, Volleyball, Lacrosse,
Cross Country



Gabriella Graham

7th grade at Propel McKeesport

Favorite subject: Social Studies

Extra-curriculars/Interests:
Gymnastics, Soccer, Running



Charlie Keefer

7th grade at Norwin
Middle School

Favorite subject: Math

Extra-curriculars/Interests:
Skiing & Orchestra

Phillip Pompura

8th grade at McKeesport
Area Middle School

Favorite subject: History

Extra-curriculars/Interests:
Soccer



Meet Our Confirmands!

Their work will culminate in writing their own statements of faith while attending a confirmation retreat at Pittsburgh Presbytery's Camp Crestfield.

Confirmation will be during our Palm Sunday Service on March 24th.



Sampson's Mills Presbyterian Church
1665 Lincoln Way
White Oak, Pa 15131

Phone: 412-678-5355
Email: office@sampsonsmills.org
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>

Save the Date!
VBS in the Park
July 29th-
August 2nd

VBS in the Park will again be
at White Oak Park.
Registration will open in mid-June.

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.