



The Rolling Stone

FALL 2024

Dear Saints,

For the last seven years, it has been my joy and honor to serve you as your pastor. I am thankful for the trust you have bestowed upon me in leading the congregation to be faithful to the vision that God has set for us. Friends, our witness bears proof that we have lived into that call - *to love and serve Jesus Christ, as we cultivated community and empowered our neighbors.*

When I first came to Sampson's Mills, I remember distinctively my interview with the search team. Upon finishing a tour of my new surroundings, one of the members said, "I hope you are not thoroughly discouraged." I think a lot of times folks come to the Mon Valley and only see vestiges of once thriving industries and bustling community centers. I believe that remark was nestled in such thinking, but for me, it provided clarity that this place and these people needed hope. They needed a cheerleader to tell them the story that God was not done with them, with us, yet. **In fact, nestled in the gospel is the truth that God does God's best work in such moments and among such people.**

For much of our beginning, I embraced that call, reminding us always that even in places of perceived scarcity there is so much abundance. We sought then to build upon our strengths; like our deep commitment to the community through the food bank and Youth Club, while trying our hand at new things from senior ministry and a more expansive view of worship and music. There, we found the answer to one of the most pressing questions facing the church these days, **namely, that if we didn't exist, our community would be deeply affected and the work of the kingdom of God in this time and place diminished.**

Just as we were getting our groove, Covid hit, but instead of allowing the pandemic to derail us, we adapted our vision and mission to meet the current realities. What a tremendously creative time to be the church. We shifted online, and now folks can attend church no matter where they are or how they might be feeling. We experimented in such a way that VBS in the Park became a mainstay. We made sure families kept getting fed, children had resources for school and neighbors in recovery could continue their healing journey in community. I am most **proud that Sampson's Mills not only survived Covid, but we even thrived, albeit forever changed.** I often recount that ministry here has been in a series of thirds. The first third was about getting to know one another as we discovered what God was up to with us. The second third invited us to be faithful during the tiring and difficult times of Covid and so much societal and political upheaval. **In this third, now that the dust had settled, we didn't inch our way back but courageously walked forward, even if not knowing exactly where God would plant us next.**

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This meant sharing time and prayer with our friends and faithful brothers and sisters in the McKeesport faith community to rally around disrupting gun violence, and supporting our schools, discerning barriers **that prevent us from living more fully into God's vision for us through the development of capital goals**, and connecting more intentionally and strategically with community partners to be a healing balm and loving presence in our neighborhood.

The work of this church continues even as I get ready to accept this new call as the General Minister of **our Presbytery. Sampson's Mills is fully empowered and equipped to weather this transition. Sampson's Mills** is abundantly gifted to be the church our community depends upon, and the membership has found a home in. Staff, ministry team leaders, elders, and deacons are well positioned to continue serving **God's people with lots of energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. Lastly, Saints, remember God is faithful – steadfastly so and always!**

I look forward to worshipping and sharing in ministry these next few Sundays until we say our “see you later” on the 22nd. Know also that I will be rooting and praying for you and your ministry, and I can't wait to continue to celebrate your success and the fruit of the kingdom in which you will most certainly bear.

In joy and with much gratitude,

Pastor Jessica

September and October Worship

9/8 – Mark 7:24-30 –
Lessons in Belonging

Back To School Blessing and Communion

9/15 – Mark 8:27-38 –
Who Do You Say that I am –
Getting It Right and Getting It Oh, So Wrong

9/22 – Mark 9:30-37 –
Coming Up Last

*Pastor Jessica's Last Sunday,
Special Congregational Meeting, and
Farewell Luncheon*

9/29 – Ralph Lowe,
Associate Minister of
Pittsburgh Presbytery, preaching



10/6 – World Communion Sunday –
Brian Wallace,
Associate Minister of
Pittsburgh Presbytery, preaching



Last year, we displayed items from other countries on our communion table for World Communion Sunday and we would like to do it again. Do you have items from other countries that you could lend us? Please bring items between September 29th and October 3rd. Thank you!

10/13, 10/20 & 10/27
we welcome
Caroline Baker
back to Sampson's Mills
to preach and lead worship.

September 22nd

Farewell Event for Pastor Jessica

RSVP



<https://forms.gle/SbBBoyTCh3Cv7q4u7>

We will enjoy a meal and fellowship together as we celebrate Pastor Jessica's time here at Sampson's Mills and wish her well beginning her next chapter as the General Minister of Pittsburgh Presbytery!

On August 29th, the Presbytery voted to call our beloved Pastor Jessica as the next General Minister of Pittsburgh Presbytery. While we will miss having her here with us at **Sampson's Mills**, we know her gifts of leadership, compassion, and service will benefit all of Pittsburgh Presbytery.

This new chapter begins October 1st.

Excerpted from Pastor Jessica's Sense of Call:

Today, I have the privilege of pastoring a congregation empowered to be the church because we trust in God's abundance, believe if we weren't around our community wouldn't be the same without us, and that we don't have to walk this healing and loving journey by ourselves in our community. In fact, we have discovered that we are the church better when we do it together....

...The role of the presbytery is to help us lean more fully into being and becoming a covenantal community, where we get to discover the joy that is possible when we do ministry together rather than in isolation and competition.



During the Examination portion of The General Minister Election



with members of the General Minister Special Nominating Committee

Love & Serve Jesus Christ

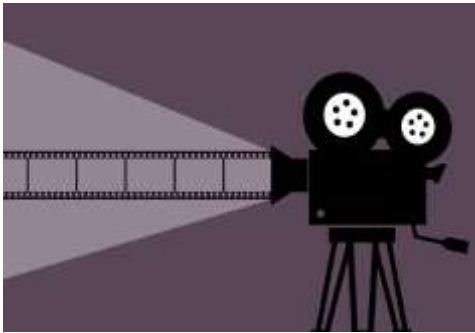


Music Ministry

With a brand new program year upon us, we are starting up bells and choir once again and are welcoming anyone who wants to be a part of either group!

Bell Choir Meets on Thursdays at 6:00pm in the sanctuary and

Choir meets on Thursdays at 7:00pm in the choir room.



Tech Team

We are actively looking for more people to join the Tech Team – we will train you on sound and/or livestream. If you like using computers and doing behind-the-scene work, this is a great opportunity for you! Contact Jo at jo@sampsonsmills.org to get on board!

Second Floor Painting Project

A Big THANK YOU to all of our volunteers who helped give our upstairs a makeover this summer! And an extra special *Thank You!* to Drew Graham, who spent countless hours painting and painting and painting and painting! We are just now putting the finishing touches on the rooms so they will all be ready for EPIC!



Children's Worship and Nursery Care Children's Worship will begin on September 15th in our new room! **Children's Worship will now be held in the old nursery.** Children age 4 through 4th grade are invited upstairs following Small Talk and will come back down to the sanctuary at the end of the service. Children age 3 and under are welcome in the Nursery at any time on a Sunday morning. On Communion **Sundays we invite all of God's children to remain in the sanctuary so we can all celebrate communion together.**



Cultivate Community

Halloween Is Coming!

The Cultivate Community Team is asking for volunteers and donations for two events this October.

Saturday, October 26th – Truck, Trunk, & Treat! 11:00am to 2:00pm

The White Oak Borough Halloween Parade and Party is held annually in our parking lot and fellowship hall. We are looking for people to decorate their trunks and hand out candy. We also need volunteers to help in the kitchen with wrapping hotdogs, making popcorn, and giving out food / drinks. Monetary donations are used to **purchase hot dogs, buns, and small cartons of Turner's Tea.**



Thursday, October 31st – Trick-or-Treat Night 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Ohio Avenue is a BUSY place on Halloween Night and SMPC is **known for it's open building, treats, and hot chocolate!** We are looking for donations of pre-packaged chips and pretzels as well as **monetary donations to purchase small cartons of turner's tea.** We also need volunteers to help make hot chocolate and give out treats that night. **The whole event is indoors where it's warm!**



Mark Your Calendar!
SMPC Annual Craft & Vendor Show
Saturday, October 12th
from 10am-2pm

Shop early and find one-of-a-kind items for the holidays with local crafters and vendors.



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.](#)



Mon Yough Chorale

Rehearsals Begin

Sunday, September 15th

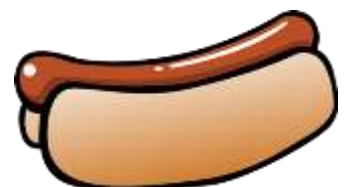
Our Building Partner begins their rehearsals are Sundays at 7pm in the SMPC Fellowship Hall. All voice types welcome!

A welcoming group ideal for music teachers, choral directors, church musicians and anyone who enjoyed singing in school and misses it!

Hot Dog & Bake Sale

Saturday, October 5th
from 11am-2pm

Busy Beaver
of White Oak



Session News



2024 Capital Improvement Goal Update

In the summer newsletter, Session shared status updates regarding two major capital improvements. The first goal is complete, which was the upgrades to the sound and a/v equipment. These improvements benefit both online and in-person worshippers with better

video and sound capabilities. We installed new cameras that provide a variety of views, new monitors to assist worship leaders in accessing the video displays and a new sound system and mics to enhance the sound quality and experience.

The second capital goal, accessible access to the sanctuary and fellowship hall, is one still very much in progress. So far, much of that work has been behind the scenes with architectural drawings, accepting bids and pulling together a funding plan.

At the August Meeting, Session approved two bids as part of our capital project goal to make the church building more accessible into the narthex/sanctuary and the fellowship hall.

One bid was approved for **Warrior Concrete** to complete construction of the narthex ramp off the parking lot, demolish and rebuild the narthex entrance steps and landing and complete necessary brick work to match the existing building. Additional work includes repairing and widening the concrete walkway leading to the fellowship hall to make the walk way **more accessible for both food bank clients' shopping carts and for scooters and wheelchairs.** The approximate cost for all the concrete work is \$49,500.00.

A second bid was accepted from **Mobile Welding Solutions** for custom pipe, aluminum railing for the narthex ramp project and stairs. The estimated cost is \$8,400.00. Session is inquiring with White Oak Borough regarding necessary building permits so to proceed with the project.

Thus far, \$10,000 has been raised via grants and a memorial gift.

Members and friends are invited to give to the project online or by check with a note indicating *Capital Project Accessibility*. Any expenses not covered by grants and special donations will come from the Capital Improvement Money Market Account, the special investment account where the sale profits of both 1677 and 1659 Lincoln Way have been deposited and are accruing interest at about 4.5% monthly.

With God's help and your support, we look forward to breaking ground soon.

I am looking forward to coming back here to share the news that we have been successful and to offer our thanksgiving for your above and beyond generosity!

Giving Snapshot



Having issues with the online giving portal? Contact the Presbyterian Foundation for help by calling 1-800-858-6127

2024 Capital Improvement Progress

	Envelopes	Online
June	\$10,303	\$4,179
July	\$8,407	\$3,505
August	\$6,835	\$2,970



Faith Formation News



EPIC Wednesday is our Intergenerational Midweek Ministry and will begin on **October 2nd**. This program is for everyone ages 5 through adulthood. There is something for everyone at EPIC! We meet on **Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7:30**. Dinner is included! This program has four main components: *Bible Story*, *Recreation*, *Family Time*, and *Worship Arts*. In Bible Story, kids are separated into age groups for age-appropriate Bible Story activities. In Recreation, everyone plays fun **games at nobody's expense**. Family Time is dinner around big tables in groups of multiple ages. Worship Arts focuses on craft, music, and drama activities that can contribute to the worship service.

If you would like to *volunteer*, please contact Jo and plan on attending the **EPIC Volunteer Meeting on Wednesday, September 25th at 6:00pm** in the Narthex.

For more information, visit sampsonsmills.org/epic.



Volunteers AND
Participants
Register Here!



Looking for Another Way to Support E.P.I.C.? E.P.I.C. Sponsorships

Support the mid-week ministry with a \$60 sponsorship! This gift will provide an individual's meals for both program semesters. Gifts can be made online <https://sampsonsmills.org/offering/> to the General Fund, just include the note of E.P.I.C. or drop an envelope in the offering plate with the same designation.



To ALL who made
VBS possible!



Save the Date for 2025

Monday, July 28th-Friday, August 1st

Empower our Neighbors

CUPBOARD STRETCHERS MINISTRY / WHITE OAK FOOD PANTRY

Through the Digital Transformation Initiative, a grant from the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank, we now have a new, dedicated website for our food bank ministry! Be sure to check out the new page, and like the [FaceBook](#) page, too!



To volunteer, contact

Jolene Keefer

Call or text: 724-396-0977

Email: Jpkeefer@comcast.net



**FEATURED NEED OF
THE MONTH:
CEREAL !**

Next Distributions

Friday, September 20th

Friday, October 18th

Friday, November 19th

Stay Healthy This Winter!

Get your vaccinations here at SMPC
Sunday, October 6th
beginning 11:30am

Staffed by Rite Aid Pharmacy
Covid, Flu, RSV, & Pneumonia Vaccines Available



Community Blood Drive at Sampson's Mills

Wednesday, September 18th from 2:30pm-7pm

Co-Sponsored by the McKeesport Lions Club, Mon River Fleet Lions Club,
White Oak Lions Club & White Oak Rotary Club.

Sign up at vitalant.org and use code UC2120033.

Mission Team Update

The SMPC Mission Committee meets quarterly to disburse funds from the general fund. We have distributed to many organizations over the past years. Our quarterly meetings engage in discussion regarding the organizations in the community that would benefit from our support. This July we donated \$250 to the 9th Street Kitchen, a congregate feeding facility which provides 80 free meals weekly. There will be volunteer opportunities to provide meals or serve food at the facility in the future. The Salvation Army was given \$500. The 9th Street Clinic is a free clinic in McKeesport which operates near the hospital for those without insurance, we donated \$500 to provide supplies for them. The Center For Women is now located in Pittsburgh and provides shelter for homeless and destitute women in need of sanctuary, they offer services to women from all communities and we donated \$500 for their work. The PGH Presbytery operates a Lazarus Fund which provides money for rent and utilities for those in need, \$250 was provided to them. In addition, the Mission fund covered the cost for the U-Haul to collect Housewares which were donated to Duquesne Presbyterian Church Free Store. Lastly, the Intersection in McKeesport provides meals in the ministry of compassionate service to those in need in the McKeesport area. Our donation of \$500 will help them until they transition to a new program.

Spotlight on 9th Street Community Kitchen

Our Mission Team visited 9th Street Community Kitchen and was impressed with their mission to bring a hot meal to those in need. We decided to help fund this mission with supplies, food, and labor. We will be asking for volunteers to help us in our endeavor.

Location: The 9th Street Community Kitchen serves any who come through their doors with a hot meal every Thursday. They are currently located at the old Synagogue on Shaw Avenue in McKeesport. They would like to find a permanent place to fulfill their mission.

Serving Times: They have eat-in dinner at 4:30-5:30, with a seconds call at 5:15. Typically, 40 clients eat in and 40-50 have take out.

Feeding Program: During the warmer months they serve a hot entrée and cold sides such as macaroni salad, fruit salad, cole slaw, etc. Frozen desserts are the favorite.

During the colder months they serve a hot entrée and hot sides such as mac and cheese, mashed potatoes, and corn, etc. Desserts such as cookies from Costco or donated cakes are passed out. Client favorites are pasta and tacos.

Ways to Help: Monday donations, food, servers, cleanup

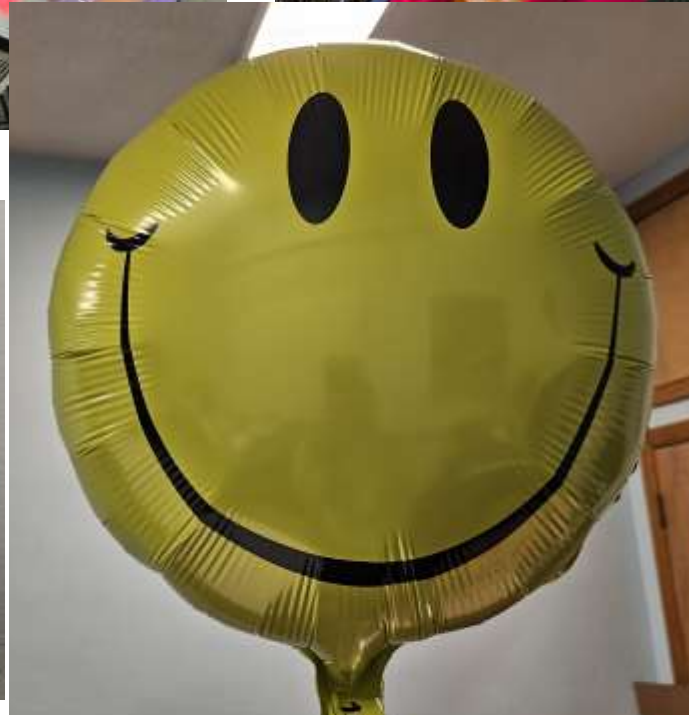
Please keep this program in your prayers and volunteer to help!

The Mission Team

First Day of School Balloons

A Big THANK YOU to all of our "Balloon Ninjas"
who delivered over 70 balloons this year to celebrate the first day of school!







Cupboard Stretchers White Oak Food Pantry

A ministry of Sampson's Mills

www.cupboardstretchers.org

For more information, to give or to volunteer

Distributions are the 3rd Friday of the month

For residents of White Oak, Coulter and Versailles Borough



Wednesdays Beginning
October 2nd

Worship 10:30 am

Streaming Online

Rev. Jessica McClure Archer

Like Us on Facebook!



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

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)



SUBSCRIBE TO OUR
You Tube
CHANNEL

<https://sampsonsmills.org/youtube>

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

*Regular church office hours are
9:30am-1:30pm, Monday-Friday*

Phone: 412-678-5355

Email: office@sampsonsmills.org

Website: sampsonsmills.org