



**WEATHER-RELATED CANCELLATIONS** Check [www.shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](http://www.shepherdstownpresbyterian.org) or 304.876.6466 for notices after 7:30 a.m. If the official leadership cannot make it to a service, anyone who can make it safely is welcome to organize an informal service of lessons, songs and prayer using the bulletin for the day.

**CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY SERVICES**

**Christmas Eve Services\***

- 5:00 p.m. Especially for children
- 8:00 p.m. Choirs, homily and candlelight
- 11:00 p.m. Carol sing, communion and candlelight



**ONE SERVICE ONLY AT 11:00 A.M.**

**December 23**

**December 30 Children's Pageant**

**January 6 Epiphany and Ordination  
of Officers**

\**Christmas Eve Offering will be split between Bluefields, Nicaragua, partner church, and Coalfield Development Corporation, in southern West Virginia, founded by Brandon Dennison, former SPC Youth Director.*



Jimmy, seated here with Pastor Ed, receives scholarship money from our Christmas Eve Offering. There is a report from Bluefields in the November 2018 newsletter.

**CHRISTMAS JOY GIFT DINNER**

**The entire congregation together in one place at one time**  
**Sunday, January 6, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Asbury United Methodist Church**  
(across from Morgan's Grove Park)  
Carol Singing • Litany of Thanksgiving • The Twelve Days of Christmas

The Joy Gift Offering is dedicated to the Presbyterian Church's racially ethnic schools and the medical supplement for retired Presbyterian ministers and missionaries. The schools and colleges are a training ground by which leadership development can take place, where people can gain the confidence and skills that they need to go out into the broader society and take their place.

Ham, beverages and tableware provided. Bring a food dish to serve 12. Food assignments per last name: A-H dessert, I-P side dish, Q-Z vegetable or salad. Would you like to help plan, set up or clean up? It is really a lot of fun and works best when we have many helping hands! Please contact Cari Simon, via [office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org).

**ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS FAIR**

One more Sunday—**December 2**. See last page of the newsletter under Mission for details.

**CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS/EPIPHANY PAGEANT**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30**, at 11 a.m.

service. All children from Sunday Studio and other children are welcome to participate. There are parts for everyone. Please sign up via [office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org) or with Chris Morehouse [noahsfamily@frontiernet.net](mailto:noahsfamily@frontiernet.net). More details to follow.



**COLD WEATHER SHELTER**

**December 8–15**

Guests will arrive around 7 p.m. Volunteers needed for morning meals and overnight stays. At least one man and one woman is needed each night. If you can help in any way, please contact: [office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org).

## Transition News...

**PRAYER REQUESTS** Send to Kathy Reid at [kathy@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:kathy@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org).

**TRANSITION QUESTIONS** Direct all questions and/or concerns to the Stated Clerk of Session, Suellen Myers, via [transition-questions@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:transition-questions@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org) or Rev. Sitterley, [bsitterley@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:bsitterley@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org).

### **PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (PNC) PROCESS**

With approval by SPC Session and Presbytery, our Ministry Information Form (MIF) has been posted on the Presbyterian Church Leadership Connection (CLC) and we are receiving and reviewing Pastoral Information Forms (PIFs) from interested applicants. In addition to PIFs received from CLC, we have received several independent self-referrals. Each member reviews every PIF we receive. You can read our MIF and Position Description on the SPC website. We invite you to share these documents with any contacts you might have and welcome your help in connecting with others who might be interested in applying.

Throughout our process we have been following the steps for calling a pastor as described in the handbook *On Calling a Pastor*, a resource for pastor nominating committees prepared by CLC and the PCUSA Office of the General Assembly (available on the PCUSA website, resources tab). This handbook describes and explains each step, in detail.

We've completed the initial steps, forming the PNC, writing and approval of MIF, placing ads, and creating a system to receive and review PIFs. Our next steps will be to request supplemental materials such as sample sermons from candidates we're most interested in, conduct interviews (via SKYPE and/or in person), and complete reference checks. Once we've chosen a prospective pastor, we'll obtain presbytery approval, coordinate with Session regarding terms of call, prepare a report for the congregation and present the nominee to the congregation for election.

We're very excited about some of the candidates we've heard from and look forward to learning more about them. Please continue your prayerful support as the Spirit guides us to choose our next pastor.

### **STRATEGIC VISIONING**

The Strategic Visioning Team (SVT) held listening sessions last winter to find out where the congregation feels that SPC could improve or do more to live out our values. One of the themes is that SPC could more clearly articulate what we stand for and aspire to as a church. Our team understood this to be an issue of identity, and recognized that an explicit statement could sharpen not only our own sense of who we are, but also how we talk about SPC to the surrounding community.

After months of thoughtful and prayerful collaboration, the team drafted the following statement, which was approved by the Session in November:

*Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church: An Inclusive Spiritual Community. We welcome all who long for meaning, hope, and belonging. Our faith and practice are rooted in the way of Jesus and enriched by wisdom from all sources. We are committed to being and becoming a people of radical compassion, working for justice and wholeness in ourselves and the world.*

This will appear in our bulletins, website and other literature. The SVT will continue to explore other ways in which we might use this statement to guide, inspire and align the church as its future unfolds.

We want to express our deep gratitude for the 100+ of you who gave your time to attend those listening sessions last winter. Your wise and caring reflections about where SPC can improve will continue to be a blessing to the whole congregation.

## SPC Monthly Activities...

**BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC** First Sundays, 9:15–10:15 a.m., in the narthex. **Final clinic: December 2**

**FIRST THINGS FIRST SUNDAY** Coins for relief of hunger. **Next: December 2 and January 6**

**TAIZÉ SERVICE** First Wednesdays, 7 p.m., Sanctuary. *A Service of Prayer* in song, silence, candlelight. **Next: December 5 and January 2**

**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S (PW) CIRCLE** First Thursdays, 10:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall. We continue our discussion of the book *Fierce: Women of the Bible and their Stories of Violence, Mercy, Bravery, Wisdom, Sex and Salvation*. **Next: December 6** is "Mary and Martha: Jesus' Family of Choice." **January 3** is "Widows: Those Left Behind." January is the annual soup and bread luncheon. All women of the church are welcome.

**CONNECTIONS** SPC's Shepherd University-based group for college students meets every other Thursday at 4:30 p.m., at the Blue Moon. For more information contact Ethel Hornbeck, [ethel@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:ethel@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org).

**MEN'S BREAKFAST** Third Saturdays. Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Discussion, 8:00–9:00 a.m. **Next: December 15 and January 19**

**LISTENING GROUPS** Prayerful listening and conversation around scripture, poetry and other selected texts, led by Ethel Hornbeck.

- Third Wednesdays, 7–8 p.m., in the balcony.

**Next: December 19 and January 16**

- Third Thursdays, 10–11 a.m., in Classroom #1. **Next: December 20 and January 17**

**CANTERBURY SERVICE** Fourth Wednesdays, 10:45 a.m. Contact Debbie Romano via [office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org). **Next: December 26 and January 23**

### **SUPPER GROUP**

TGIF Potluck, **Friday, December 14**, 6:00 p.m. (*note time change from 6:30*), hosted by Cathy & Don Cross. Bring a wrapped gift (not new) for Yankee Swap.

**Friday, January 18**, 6:30 p.m., in SPC Fellowship Hall, hosted by Chris Duewel and Ed Zahniser

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**OFFERING ENVELOPES** To save postage, please pick yours up in the Fellowship Hall.  
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**SPC YARNS AND THREADS GROUP** Last Saturdays, 1 p.m., Fellowship Hall. Bring your own project or join us making prayer shawls and baby blankets. Contact Melinda Landolt or Elaine Hurd via [office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org). **Next: December 29 and January 26**

**COMMUNITY HYMN SING at SPC**

We will resume our tradition of Last Sunday-of-the-Month Hymn Sings, 4:30 p.m., upstairs in the Choir Room.

Join us for a solid hour of singing hymns with good tunes and inspiring lyrics: gospel, old-time and new. Contact Terry Tucker via [office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org). **Next: January 27**



**Elsewhere...**

**COMMUNITY DINNER** sponsored by the Jefferson County



Homeless Coalition. First Sundays, 5 p.m., at Zion Episcopal Church, 301 East Congress St., Charles Town. We need: main dishes, veggies, salad, fresh fruit, bread, butter, and desserts. Sign up in the Fellowship Hall or go to [PerfectPotluck.com](http://PerfectPotluck.com);

coordinator Wright, password 5777. Questions? Contact Bert Wright via [office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org).

Drop off hot food from 3:45–4:15 p.m., that Sunday. Leave other food in the SPC refrigerator anytime (marked Community Dinner). *Please use disposable containers, if possible.* **Next: December 2 and January 6**

**ROLLING RIDGE STUDY RETREAT COMMUNITY**

For details, check *Events* at [www.rollingridge.net](http://www.rollingridge.net).

“The Gift of Story: A retreat during Advent and the Winter Solstice” **November 30–December 2**



**THREE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAROLING**

**SING-A-LONG** O’Hurley’s General Store, **Sunday, December 2, 2–3 p.m.**, led by Rie Wilson and Carol Wood.

**CAROLING THROUGH SHEPHERDSTOWN, Sunday, December 9, 4 p.m.** All ages are invited to join us. Wear your Christmas hats and bring a joyful voice! Meet in front of the Shepherdstown library.

**SHEPHERDSTOWN COMMUNITY CAROLING** will be Sunday, December 16, 7 p.m., led by Terry Tucker. We will meet inside The Devonshire Arms on Princess St., carol around town, visiting the homes of our neighbors for one hour, then return to The Devonshire to continue singing with a mug of hot mulled wine or cider to warm us (or any other drink or food we care to order). Caroling booklets will be provided.

**Mark your Calendar...**

**YOUTH MISSION TRIP** will go to The Center in Baltimore, weekend of March 9, 2019. Stay tuned for details.

**O God, This Day We Grieve**

O God, this day we grieve your children who were lost, and we, as one, are horrified by hatred’s cost.

For people loved by you— your children, called and blest— were murdered on their Sabbath Day of prayer and rest.

We grieve for those who died, for families left behind, for those who wonder if this world can still be kind.

So many lives were changed, so many dreams were crushed. There’s so much hatred! God, what has become of us?

We thank you, God, for ones who bravely entered in, to serve and to protect, so hatred would not win— and for the ones who lead, we offer you this prayer:

May they be good examples of respect and care.

God, teach us all to love— and may we understand that hatred cannot have a place in this good land,

and guns cannot secure the peace we pray will be.

May we, together, build a true community.

O God, unite us all, no matter how we pray, and may we work together for a better day— where all may safely live and have no cause for fear.

May we together seek your peace and justice here.

Tune: Traditional Hebrew melody (“The God of Abraham Praise”) Text: Copyright © 2018 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

(NOTE: This was written shortly after the shooting in Pittsburgh at The Tree of Life Synagogue, October 27.)

**PeaceFest Sunday, November 4**



## Mission...

### ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS FAIR

DECEMBER 2 is the last Sunday, after both services, for the **Alternative Christmas Gifts Fair**.

The projects to be sponsored are:

1. The Colombia Accompaniment Program funds a "ministry of presence," preparing volunteers to accompany peasant groups, social and church activists and others advocating for displaced people threatened daily by violence.
2. A program through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to assist immigrants with physical, legal and transportation needs at the border.
3. Backpacks for families to carry essential items, such as food and diapers, on their journey.
4. Provide \$50 hotel rooms for the expected cold weather shelter overflow of homeless persons in Jefferson County this year. The shelters can accommodate up to 16, but there are a known 68 homeless in the county.

The **Alternative Christmas Gifts Fair** encourages people to give donations to these selected charities rather than spending money for obligatory, and often perfunctory, gifts to family members and friends. Custom-made Christmas cards tell your loved ones about the alternative Christmas gift made in their honor.

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### OPERATION CHRISTMAS TEEN—2018

Operation Christmas Teen is a volunteer group that collects and distributes gifts to needy teenagers in the area, as identified through schools and community agencies. The goal is to provide a gift bag with three items for each student. Bags are home-delivered by law enforcement personnel. Store gift cards or teen-appropriate new gifts (unwrapped) are greatly appreciated. A collection box (with a list of suggested gifts) will be in the SPC Fellowship Hall through **Sunday, December 16**. Contact Steve Warner: 304.676.4422. You can give gift cards/certificates to either Steve or Chris Cubby. Older kids deserve a happy Christmas, too!

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## Members and Friends...



**LARRY and JOYCE NEUMARK** at a glacial lagoon near Vik, Iceland

Youth group and adults complete raking leaves for SPC members.



## Nurse's Notes...

### SCREENING FOR ANEURYSMS

Several recent developments have prompted me to remind you about the screening for aneurysms. Abdominal aortic aneurysm is a bulging, weakened area in the wall of the aorta resulting in an abnormal widening that's in excess of 50% of normal diameter. Aneurysms frequently continue to increase in size and progressively weaken the artery wall. When this happens, surgical intervention may be needed to prevent rupture. Medicare Part B possibly covers a one-time screening, but you will need a referral from your physician.

At-risk individuals with a family history, or males age 65 to 75, who have smoked 100 cigarettes in their lifetime, qualify for screening. And I have been informed that this screening has been known to pick up pancreatic cancer! So do check it out, please.

### MY NEWS

I will be retiring as your Parish Nurse at the end of the year. I can't thank you enough for all of your support and love shown me over my eight years. You gave me much more than I gave you!!!

Even though I won't be holding blood pressure clinics after December 2, I will still be in church and would very much like to talk to you about any concerns, medical or otherwise. And come January, I will be installed as a deacon, a role that I am very much looking forward to! So, stay tuned, keep up the good work with your health and thanks again for everything!

—Merry Morgan RN,

## Financial Corner...

**GENERAL FUND** through November 25. Expected to date: **\$257,596**. Received to date: **\$255,938**. Building Fund pledged for 2018: **\$28,910**. Received to date: **\$20,460**.

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**NEXT NEWSLETTER February 2019**. Send announcements, articles, member news, and your favorite vacation pictures to [office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org)  
**Deadline: January 23**

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