



THE MESSENGER

June 2025

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church
Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

PASTOR'S NOTE: Refuge, Resilience, Resistance, and Re-Imagining

Last month, guided by Revelation, Chapters 21 - 22, we glimpsed a vision of the world as it could be — and, in some mysterious way, already is. A vision of God's healing waters wash over every wound, where trees bear leaves not just for beauty, but for the healing of the nations. John of Patmos cast this vision for the early church in a time of tyranny, calling them to become a place of **refuge, resilience, resistance, and re-imagining**.

We are called to be the same.

This month, on PRIDE Sunday (June 1), we become a place of **refuge**, most especially for those who have been told they are *not* "fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God." We bear witness to the courage and tenacity of the LGBTQIA+ community claiming the river of blessing that has always been theirs, as well as ours. We reaffirm the refuge we already are for children and youth, as four confirmands present themselves for membership.

On Pentecost (June 8), we practice **resilience**, as an outpouring of the Spirit enlivens our creaturely breath, the bread and the cup, and the sacred ecology of memory and communion.

On Trinity Sunday (June 15, Father's Day), we move into **resistance** alongside the voice of Lady Wisdom crying out in the streets, speaking truth to power with fierce love and tenderness for all of creation.

On the remaining Sundays — and indeed throughout the entire month — we invite a **re-imagining** of who we can become. Through palms of longing and trembling, the streams of grace and the trembling of the deep remind us that transformation comes not through control but through flow. Not through might, but through movement.

Throughout it all we keep casting the vision, naming the hurts, claiming the healing, loving boldly, grieving deeply, and organizing wisely. The river is already flowing, through us and among us. We do not have to generate the flow. We only have to make room for it to rise.

— In the flow with you,
Pastor Gusti

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

The "core commitments" that guide us, and the underlying beliefs that support them are:

Radical Hospitality: We Choose Welcome

- Everyone and everything, and every part of ourselves, is included in the circle of God's love.
- Imperfections and suffering are integral to the spiritual path.

Holistic Spirituality: Everything Belongs

- The Way of Jesus is a path of transformation.
- Doubt and questions are essential to faith.
- We are connected in Love with all, including those who have gone before us, and all those yet to come.
- We value all sources of Wisdom.

Engaged Compassion: God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God

- The Way of Jesus is a way of being in this world, loving, serving and making things whole.
- Loving God means loving all of creation.

Church Staff

Rev. Gusti Linnea Newquist (she/her), Pastor

Christa Mastrangelo Joyce (she/her), Director of Children and Youth Formation

Sheila Melendez (she/her), Choir Director

Sam Jannotta (he/him), Accompanist

Mark Nutwell (he/him), Tech Support (Contract)

Olivia Gill (she/her), Nursery Lead

Lynn Dampman (she/her), Administrative Assistant

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office@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

Contacting Pastor Gusti: Pastor Gusti makes every effort to respond to communications as soon as possible between the hours of 9am and 9pm Saturday through Thursday. Fridays are her Sabbath. If you are having a pastoral emergency, please call any time, day or night. 681-283-5314;

gusti@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

“Vision Casting”

Worship in June 2025

Pastor Gusti’s May 18 sermon
invited us into a vision of the church as a place of
Refuge, Resilience, Resistance, and Re-Imagining,
based on the vision cast in Revelation 21 - 22.

Worship in June will further reflect on this vision,
including a special focus on what it means
to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.

Sunday, June 1

Wonderfully Made

Matthew 19:12

Seventh Sunday of Easter

PRIDE Sunday

Guest Reflections from Krisztina Thatcher and Chris Morehouse

Reception of Confirmands

Let anyone accept this who can.

Sunday, June 8

An Earth Full of Creatures

Psalms 104:24-30

Pentecost

Communion [rescheduled from June 1]

Memorial Moment [rescheduled from June 1]

The earth is full of your creatures.

Sunday, June 15

Wisdom at the Gate

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Trinity Sunday

Father’s Day

“To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all who live.”

Sunday, June 22

Streams of Grace

Psalms 42

Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you.

Sunday, June 29

The Trembling of The Deep

Psalms 77:1-2, 11-20

Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

When the waters saw you, O God ... the very deep trembled.



Congratulations to our Graduates!



EMILY SYKES

Emily is the daughter of Bob and Sherry Sykes and graduated from West Virginia University in December 2024. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Journalism with an emphasis in Advertising with minors in Marketing and Event Planning. She is hoping to eventually relocate to Pittsburgh to begin her career.



KODY BAKER

Kody is the son of Season Jones and is graduating from New Kent High School in New Kent, VA. While in high school, Kody participated in Bridging Communities Culinary Classes, Landscaping, and Mixed Martial Arts (including Muay Thai and boxing). He will be attending the Culinary Institute of America in New York pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Food Business Management (Culinary Arts). Kody's future plans include working in a Michelin star restaurant or opening a restaurant of his own. *(Editor's note: Kody was the chef for the Oxfam Banquet sponsored by SPC in March.)*



GIGI BROWN

Gigi is the daughter of Thad and Wendy Brown. She is graduating from Arcadia University in Glenside, PA with a B.S. degree in mathematics and a minor in bioinformatics. While at Arcadia, she was a four-year member of Arcadia's swim team and a lifeguard at their pool. She was the lead math tutor at the college learning center and a member of the math and actuarial science club. She will be attending Temple University in the fall to pursue her Ph.D. in bioinformatics. She offers these words of wisdom for upcoming college students—"You're a lot more capable than you think, follow your interests, and be a nice person."



AVA JOYCE

Ava is the daughter of Greg and Christa Mastrangelo Joyce. She is graduating from high school and was classically educated through a private program called Classical Conversations. Her activities include playing the guitar and swimming with the Sea Snakes Swim Team at Shepherd University. Ava plans to attend Hagerstown Community College in the fall and transfer to West Virginia University in the spring. She will be majoring in psychology.



KATIE MYERS

Katie is the granddaughter of Linda Kelso. Katie is graduating from the University of Maryland with a double major, a B.S. in Kinesiology and a B.A. in Psychology. She plans to enter Northwestern University in Chicago in the fall to pursue a three-year Doctorate in Physical Therapy degree.



MAEGYN KELSO

Maegyn is the granddaughter of Linda Kelso and is graduating from Martinsburg High School. Maegyn will enter Shepherd University in the fall to major in psychology.



MAKAYLA NANA-ADJOA ESSIEN

Makayla is the granddaughter of Lynn Dampman and will graduate from Spring Mills High School in Martinsburg, West Virginia. In the fall, Makayla plans to pursue an IT degree at Towson State University in Maryland.



TY PARKER JAHNIGEN

Ty is the nephew of Lynn Dampman and will graduate from Millbrook High School in Virginia. Ty will attend Wilkes College in Wilkes-Barre, PA where he will play football while pursuing a mechanical engineering degree.



MAY SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

At the May meeting, Session continued to prayerfully consider SPC's role in this time of constantly shifting public policies and heard thoughtful and heartfelt reports on the church's current and future financial wellbeing, new website update, new members, Deacon activities, Presbyterian Women projects, social justice, and property.

SPC is and is becoming a place of Refuge, Resilience, Resistance, and Re-imagining. There is now the opportunity to clearly align our precepts with what we are doing in the world now and continuing forward.

Budget and Finance reported that the annual financial audit was completed on April 21 according to established procedures. There is continuing focus on and planning for SPC's long-term financial support. Quarterly financial reports to the congregation will begin on May 18. The committee reviewed the report from Communications and recommended moving forward with the updated website suggestions. This was approved by Session. As recommended by Budget and Finance, Patti McCarthy was elected SPC Treasurer for a three-year term, renewable for a second term. Jim Crawford, as a Trustee, is reviewing options for SPC's insurance.

Two people attended a New Member Class on May 3. Suellen Myers represented Session at the meeting. They, along with seven others, joined by reaffirmation or profession of faith on May 4.

The Deacons met and continued their study about how the disciples were sent out in pairs and how it is necessary to find a rhythm of sacred rest in their own ministry. Deacons were also reminded that Presbytery is providing boundaries training for any who have not already taken the class. Deacons will be assigned to the new members. The Deacons continue to provide the weekly support group for any who have been impacted by actions of the government.

Presbyterian Women received Session approval for two projects. The first is to provide a meal at The Community Cup in Martinsburg on a Wednesday evening about every two months. This opportunity will be open to the congregation and will not compete with the monthly meal led by Lee Doty. It's seen as an opportunity to further help with food insecurity. The second is to collect non-perishable food for Jefferson County Community Ministries and Shepherdstown Shares food pantries on an ongoing basis. Baskets will be provided in the Sanctuary.

The Property Committee continues to assess future projects and is gathering estimates for repairing the brickwork on the front steps as well as exterior painting. A project checklist is posted on the bulletin board opposite the office.

Continuing Guns 2 Gardens was endorsed with the understanding that there may be pushback.

The Matthew 25 group has talked with the Community Markets Inc. who connect locally grown food with families in need. They are looking for support as they are losing four AmeriCorps workers. The Group was present at the Community Cup celebration for Reverend Dwight McCormick. Community Cup has many upcoming events that are posted on their website.

Immigration/Refugee Support gave highlights of the year which included collaborating with Mountain State Justice, partnering with Jefferson County Schools Latino organization, growing a partnership with St. Agnes and their work with the wider immigrant community, attending national training, and distributing bilingual "know your rights" cards.

Pastor Gusti spoke at the Quaker sponsored event on Good Friday and that evening at the Seven Last Words of Christ service at Asbury UMC. She will meet with the confirmands on May 11. At her request, it was approved to move June communion to June 8. Christa Joyce was approved to offer the Reflection on Sunday, May 11. Four confirmands will profess their faith on June 1.

The SPC Session meets the 2nd Thursday of the month from 7-9 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall and via Zoom. Meetings are open to any member of the congregation who wishes to attend. Contact Suellen Myers, Clerk of Session, to learn more.

GIVING

The congregation has been asked to increase pledged giving for the next 5 years by 5%. There are many ways to satisfy your pledges, special offerings and individual contributions for a project or program dear to you:

- By check: Made out to SPC, PO Box 268, Shepherdstown, WV 25443
- Online: www.shepherdstownpresbyterian.org, use the GIVE icon on the home page. You may use PayPal or a credit card
- In Church: In the offering plate on Sundays

BUDGET AT A GLANCE THROUGH April 30, 2025

<u>2025 at a Glance</u>	<u>2025 Budget (12 Months)</u>	<u>Actuals (through March 31)</u>	<u>Actuals as % 12-Month Budget</u>
Operating Income	\$385,104	\$195,922	51%
Operating Expenses	\$390,589	\$129,024	33%

We are four months, or 33% of the way into the new year. We've already received 51% of our anticipated annual operating income, largely in part to one-time special gifts from the congregation. Expenses are tracking mostly as expected for this time of the year.



UPDATE ON 2ND ANNUAL BASEBALL OUTING

We have secured 30 tickets for Friday, August 8, at 6:30 p.m. for our 2nd Annual Baseball Outing at Meritus Park in Hagerstown. To reserve your ticket (\$10 each) please contact Joyce Neumark, neumark@myactv.net by Monday, June 30. If we need more tickets we will be able to get them, but we want to see what kind of response we have before ordering more.

No money is due at this time; we just need to know if you plan to attend. Join your SPC friends and bring your neighbors to this game against the Long Island Ducks. This is also "Firework Friday." Enjoy the fireworks following the game.

DEACON TEAM UPDATE

Donna Dettling, Deacon Moderator

At our **monthly deacon meeting on May 3**, we continued our previous study about Jesus sending the disciples out in pairs to proclaim his way, cast out demons, and heal the sick. We focused on their return to Jesus, when they were instructed to go to a deserted place to rest. However, the crowds recognized and followed them, making respite difficult. **We talked about how this work can be exhausting, and the need for us to find a rhythm of sacred rest in our own deacon ministry.** We had an open forum for deacons to bring up questions that have emerged for them as they tend their flocks.

We talked about resources we have available within the church to help us support our flocks and ourselves, like the Threshold Singers, PrayerNet, meal and ride volunteers, prayer shawls, and more, then went over some updates and reminders, including the need for deacons to take **Boundaries Training** through our presbytery if they didn't do it last year. **We are thrilled that a large group of new members have joined SPC, and are in the process of assigning deacons to them.**

We hope you enjoyed the **deacon introduction paragraphs and photos** in the April and May newsletters, and that you will now be able to match their names and faces. **I encourage you to make a personal connection with them, so that the deacon ministry can flow both TO you and FROM you, to complete the Share the Care philosophy. Your response means a lot to us.**

PrayerNet

Please send your prayer requests to prayernet@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org. You may also call the church office at 304-876-6466 during office hours (Monday - Friday, 8am - 2pm). A couple of practical reminders as you make your requests:

1. Please make sure the person for whom you are requesting prayer has given their permission. Due to privacy considerations, we are unable to share requests without that permission.
2. Please indicate whether or not you would like this request to be shared in worship.
3. You may also indicate that you prefer to keep this request confidential among the PrayerNet Team (currently Pastor Gusti, Lynn Dampman, Jen Jones, and Mica Martin.)

If you are having a pastoral emergency (death of a spouse or child, life-threatening medical emergency, etc.), please contact Pastor Gusti directly at 681-283-5314. If you would like to participate in our larger PrayerNet community (as one of the 90+ who have agreed to pray), or volunteer as one of the PrayerNet administrators, contact Lynn at the church office: lynn@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org.

Deacon Shepherd for Animals

Carol Wood was commissioned to remind us of the holiness pets add to our lives. This includes care to those who have lost a dear companion, assistance during final days with a pet, and support when bringing a new pet into the home. Contact Carol at cwood453@aol.com.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Donna Dettling, Co-Moderator

We had a nice, informal gathering of seven PW members at **The Community Cup in Martinsburg** on April 22. We enjoyed the pleasant atmosphere there, and the opportunity to support them and be in fellowship outside our building! Thank you to those who went.

Fourteen women attended our **May 1 PW meeting** in person. Diana Eldridge led us through the final chapter, 'Tear Down the Walls' and the epilogue in our book ***Poverty, By America***, by Matthew Desmond. We discussed how people get insular when affordable housing is segregated into separate neighborhoods rather than integrated into others. When neighborhoods are integrated, every family has 'skin in the game,' and the results for children have typically been better performance in school and higher education levels achieved, and for adults a stronger sense of belonging and partnership. **We all thought this eye-opening and impactful book on systemic poverty was a valuable read.**

To supplement our poverty study and enhance SPC's support of our local communities during this time of expanded food insecurity, the PW group has decided (and received approval from Session) to lead two new initiatives:

- **SPC will provide dinner for approximately 25 people every two months at The Community Cup.** A need was identified for free Wednesday evening meals in Berkeley County, and The Community Cup responded and is seeking partners (as Rev. Dwight McCormack told us in his recent sermon.) Starting soon, SPC will be one of those partners. PW member Susan Lovell has graciously offered to coordinate this effort and put together the online sign-ups. **We see this as a Berkeley County complement to our monthly Community Meals, which serve primarily Jefferson County residents. Watch for more details on this exciting partnership and help us share our blessings with others!**
- **Beginning immediately, there are two baskets next to the communion table in the sanctuary, to collect non-perishable food for the Jefferson County Community Ministries and Shepherdstown Shares food pantries.** Please leave contributions any time, and especially on communion Sundays. This is a simple, but meaningful, way to share with our local communities, made easier since the PW group will make sure the food gets delivered.

Our treasurer, Lynne Wiseman, reported that **our collection last month for the prayer shawl and baby blanket ministry to use for yarn totaled \$285!** At this meeting, we collected donations for the **Presbyterian Women's Birthday Fund** which benefits charities chosen by the national organization, and we also brought **non-perishable food for Shepherdstown Shares Food Pantry.**

We would love for you to join us at the last meeting of our 2024-2025 season, **the annual PW picnic on June 5 from 11 a.m. to 1:00 pm at Morgan's Grove Park under the pavilion.** It's a pot-luck, so please bring a luncheon main dish, salad, or dessert to share, along with your own drink and utensils for yourself and your dish. We will provide the paper goods. **We hope to see you there to celebrate an enjoyable and successful year of PW!**

SUPPORT GROUP FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY EXECUTIVE ORDERS

If you or your loved ones have been personally affected by, or are anxious about, the recent executive orders related to federal workers, DEI initiatives, immigration, transgender identity and care, and more, or if you are grieving the overall state of the nation, **your church is here for you!**

We began a support group on February 11, and continue to meet weekly on Tuesdays, at 5 pm on Zoom. You are welcome to drop in when you would like; there is no commitment to coming each week. **Come for spiritual grounding, support and sharing, and an opportunity to discuss possible actions that could be taken.**

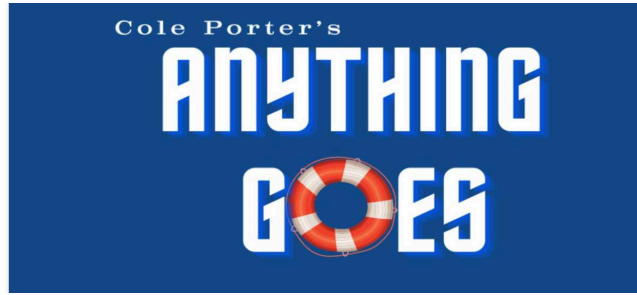
We have a group of five certified, professional coaches, who are offering pro bono coaching sessions to those facing possible job loss or early retirement, and a local counselor, offering a therapeutic counseling support group. Information on the coaches is available in the narthex and the Fellowship Hall.

We received the results of the **SPC ‘How Should the Church Respond’ survey**, and a team has begun to look at the suggested ways to support our community. More information to follow!

If you would like **more information on any of the offerings mentioned above**, please contact the church office or Donna Dettling, donna.dettling@gmail.com. We will send you the Zoom link to the meeting or any other details you need.

In addition, you are always encouraged to contact your Deacon directly and/or make an appointment through the church office to meet with Pastor Gusti.

(Editor’s Note: There will be a combined July/August edition of The Messenger which will be published around July 1. There will be no publication in August. Therefore, if you have reports or events for July or August, please submit them by June 20 so they can be included. We will accept articles for the September issue in August. Thank you.)



Choir Director Sheila Melendez had a starring role in the musical “Anything Goes” which was performed at Hagerstown Community College in April 2025. Sheila had great support from SPC choir members and others who attended the performance.



SPC Members during the intermission



After the performance with Sheila