

THE MESSENGER

April 2024

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church
Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

“Garden of Grace”

Eastertide at SPC

*Supposing him to be the gardener,
Mary Magdalene opens her heart to the risen Christ.
As our gardens begin to grow in earnest,
we, too, open our hearts to the hope of resurrection.*

Sunday, April 7

Guest Preacher Colleen Earp

Lesson TBD

Second Sunday of Easter

Communion

Rev. Colleen Earp, Director of Programs at Massanetta Springs
Camp and Conference Center, finds being in community with nature and one another
to be the perfect setting to practice loving neighbors and enemies alike.

Sunday, April 14

Youth Reflections on Retreat

Lesson TBD

Third Sunday of Easter

Led by Christa Mastrangelo Joyce,
Coordinator for Children and Youth Formation,
our young people will lead us in energizers, personal reflection,
and the importance of ecclesiastical advocacy.

Sunday, April 21

Good Shepherd Sunday

John 10:11-18

Fourth Sunday of Easter/Earth Day Sunday

Sacrament of Baptism

In our Baptismal vows, we commit to protecting
the most vulnerable among us,
including the planet on which they depend.

Sunday, April 28

Branching Out

John 15:1-8

Fifth Sunday of Easter

The spiritual life includes
pruning the branches that no longer bear fruit,
while abiding in the vine from which we draw our strength.

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), Children and Youth Education Coordinator
Dr. Steve Grives (he/him), 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

100 W. Washington Street
P.O. Box 268
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

Church Office Hours: 8am – 2pm, Monday through Friday; 304/876-6466
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

What We Do Matters to God—Living Matthew 25

By Anne Teresa

In the Fall of 2023 Pastor Gusti based several sermons on Matthew 25, particularly the invitation in the parable of the sheep and goats, in which Jesus makes clear that what we do matters to God and how we treat others is important to God. The PC (USA) Matthew 25 Initiative invites Presbyterian congregations and other organizations to actively engage in the world around them – to tackle systemic racism and systemic poverty, climate change, and build relationships among congregations. Matthew 25 is not a program, but more of a scriptural vision.

And yet, here it is, right here in Matthew 25, for those of us who have not yet figured out God cares far more about what we do - or in this case what we do not do - than what we claim to believe or disbelieve. If we want to live in a world that is just, Matthew 25 insists, we have to practice living justly. We simply need to do, day in and day out, what Jesus says to do right here in Matthew 25: offer raw unfettered human companionship to those who continue to be vulnerable. Treat others with genuine caring and courageous witness. Suffer in solidarity while also seeking - and finding - spiritual solace. Rev. Gusti Newquist

To date, 1197 congregations, 85 presbyteries, 11 synods, and 67 other groups have joined the Matthew 25 movement, including 16 churches in our Presbytery. Matthew 25 provides a framework for congregational time and treasure, is tailored to local needs, and encourages us to partner with allies and advocates to increase our impact.

SPC is exploring three areas:

- **Support for the Community Cup** in Martinsburg
- **Food Insecurity**
- **Clean Water**

What will move us forward as a spiritual community, as residents of the 4th poorest state in the U.S., and as a whole denomination? We do have some opportunities waiting for us to explore. Helping at the Community Cup, whether at Friday evening worship services or just stopping by for a cup of coffee and greeting the regulars, gives us a window into the varied and challenging life situations the vulnerable encounter. Learning about why so many are hungry in our area will move us beyond giving food to, potentially, reducing that need. We need to know more about our water and the impacts of chemical spills, regulation rollbacks and policies that are not consistent with clean water for everyone: West Virginians pay more than any other state for municipal water.

Systemic change focuses on long-term solutions, choosing the work that will have the most impact. We need your interest, input and engagement to identify which of these areas SPC can best tackle to effect the kind of change that stems the tide.

To learn more or comment, contact Anne Teresa at ateresa@comcast.net



By Larry and Joyce Neumark
Communications Team



Meet the Dettlings! They are new to our church, having attended their first service on Christmas Eve 2019. They became members in February 2023. As a child, Donna's family, which includes five siblings, moved quite a bit. Eventually they moved to Montgomery County, Maryland, and she graduated from Walter Johnson High School. Brian's longstanding family roots were in California, specifically the Mojave Desert, where he grew up riding trail bikes.

Eventually his family moved to Springfield, Virginia. Donna and Brian met online and discovered that they lived only four miles from each other. Brian recalls, "We found each other in the February blizzard." Each has "a pair of kids" (a boy and a girl) and seven grandchildren between them.

They moved to Shepherdstown in 2019, liking "the artsy uniqueness" of the town as well as the cultural opportunities, such as CATF, the Conservation Film Festival, and the Shepherdstown Speak Story Series. Donna's career was in accounting with Marriott, from which she retired in 2023. Brian was a technical writer in private industry and various government agencies. He also has a long history of working with props in theater productions and with independent filmmakers. He "self-retired" in the fall of 2023.

Donna, a lifelong Presbyterian, has an interest in mission. In her previous church she was "super involved" with mission trips to Mexico. She organized six trips there and helped build houses for those in need. Brian, although not previously a churchgoer, credits Donna "for bringing me into the fold." Together they like "the warm feel" of SPC and "what the church stands for." Donna was selected as an SPC Deacon beginning in 2024. Additionally, she is active with Presbyterian Women and organizes the 11 a.m. communion servers.

They both enjoy reading, with Donna having read or listened to around 100 books last year. Some of her favorites include *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver and *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese. She is involved with two book clubs and is currently starting one in her neighborhood. Additionally, she enjoys painting and gardening and is in the Master Naturalist program of the Potomac Valley Audubon Society. Brian's taste in books is more

“light fare,” including intrigue and adventure books, biographical books about motorcycle racers, as well as films.

When asked about someone they admire, Brian cited Dean Goodine, a Canadian “property master guy,” whose successful films include “Unforgiven” and “Open Range.” Brian considers Dean a “colleague and mentor.” Donna highlighted her father, who was a ground attack pilot in World War II. He was shot down and captured by the Germans over the border in France and held as a POW for nine months. Although treated well by the Germans, he suffered a broken back, ankle, and shoulder. A young nurse took care of him and nursed him back to health. It turned out that nurse became Donna’s mother, as the soldier and nurse eventually got married! “It is quite a story,” Donna reminisced.

We are happy that Brian and Donna found their way to SPC. Welcome Brian and Donna!

CHILDREN AND YOUTH UPDATE

Christa Mastrangelo Joyce,
Children and Youth Education Coordinator

As we head into Holy Week, both the youth group and the K-5th graders of SPC are continuing to explore what it looks like to “Love God, Neighbor, and Enemy.” The children have been creating a special surprise to reveal to the church. The Youth group dove deeply into this theme starting with this wonderful video: https://www.ted.com/talks/valarie_kaur_3_lessons_of_revolutionary_love_in_a_time_of_rage?language=en

We will continue to explore this during our youth retreat weekend to Rolling Ridge Retreat Center, upcoming April 5-7.

The youth group has learned a lot about working with vulnerable communities and have made such important contributions to Baltimore, MD, during our past missions trips. Most importantly, we've begun to understand the essential value of every human and the need for connection to God, the earth, and community. We are beginning to explore how to join the mission of The Community Cup in Martinsburg, WV, as we look to continue or vision toward missions and outreach in our local communities.

Finally, we are planning a special youth led service April 14th. This will be a service of celebration and joy. Please join us for either service to support our incredible youth members.



The Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity encourages churches and presbyteries to recognize March 31 as Transgender Day of Visibility

Picture a life shrouded in secrecy, where your true essence remains concealed from the world. Your official documents do not reflect who you truly are. Every public appearance demands that you wear a mask, hiding behind a facade that doesn't align with your inner truth. Imagine facing legal barriers that limit your access to essential healthcare, participation in sports, and even the use of public restrooms. Amid this oppressive environment, consider the profound significance of discovering a small community of allies who not only accept but celebrate your authentic self, allowing it to shine brilliantly amidst the darkness. This is the significance of the Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV).

TDOV is a day that our local churches can embrace and celebrate the diverse identities of transgender and non-binary individuals, affirming their intrinsic worth as creations of God. By providing a welcoming space for positive and genuine representation, a local church can help these individuals feel acknowledged and valued for who they truly are. Furthermore, TDOV serves as a valuable opportunity to dispel misconceptions and promote understanding of the transgender and non-binary experience. Using educational resources and social connections, a local church can foster empathy and solidarity within the broader LGBTQIA+ and PC(USA) communities, thereby creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

The Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity (ACQ+E) encourages both local churches and presbyteries to continuing our ongoing denominational efforts of diversity, inclusion, and Christian unity by recognizing March 31 as Transgender Day of Visibility.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (1 Cor 12:12 & 26)

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Year-to-Date Budget at a Glance – as of February 29, 2024

The Session is pleased to report the congregation has stepped up generously in response to our request to increase pledges by 5% per year over the next five years. Total 2024 pledges as of January 20 are 2.5% above 2023 pledges. We will continue to encourage the congregation to give as generously as you are able. ***If you are able to increase your 2024 pledge even further, please do not hesitate to let the church office know.*** We are grateful for you!

Actual (one month)

\$80,722	Total Income (Pledges, Additional Giving, Special Offerings)
<u>\$60,691</u>	Total Expenses (Pastor, Personnel, Property, Mission, Administration, Worship, Social Justice, Education, Special Offerings)
*\$20,031	NET INCOME

Budgeted (annual)

\$317,114	Total Income
<u>\$354,653</u>	Total Expenses
*-\$37,539	NET INCOME

* Based on the increase in 2024 Pledged Giving, the stability of our Reserves, and the frugality of congregational spending, the Session decided to continue its strategic investments, in spite of the sizable deficit, in external mission and advocacy, ministry and children and youth, and online worship tech support. This deficit will be covered by reserves, in the trust that congregational giving will continue to increase in the next four years.

MARCH SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Reflected on the four year anniversary of the COVID shutdown

Reviewed the three aims of SPC's Matthew 25 Initiative and approved the formation of a steering committee

Approved plans to replace a major section of the roof

Approved an updated policy for Nursery staff

Reviewed options from the Safety Team for improving exterior access control to the building

Received updates from the Social Justice Committee, the Deacon Moderator, and Adult Ed

The SPC Session meets the 2nd Thursday of the month, 7pm, in the Fellowship Hall and via Zoom. Meetings are open to any member of the congregation who wishes to attend. Contact Dave Smith, Clerk of Session, to learn more.

DEACON SHEPHERDS, Ministries of Care

AN INCREDIBLE RETREAT! On Saturday, March 23, the Deacons held a retreat with Pastor Gusti, incoming Deacon Moderator Jen Jones, and former Deacon Shepherd Leslie Williams. Mindful of how to preserve the best from our past, we talked about new ways to live out Engaged Compassion, Holistic Spirituality, and Radical Hospitality in our work as Deacons. We brainstormed possible new forms of outreach and ways to support Pastor Gusti. Please hold us in prayer as we move forward.

THE PRAYERNET is available to share your joys and concerns throughout the week. To share your prayers with the PrayerNet and/or to join the PrayerNet, contact Debbie Romano at romano.debbie@gmail.com.

DEACON SHEPHERD FOR ANIMALS, Carol Wood has been commissioned to remind us of the holiness they add to our lives. This includes a card ministry for those who have lost a dear companion Animal as well as celebrating those who have brought a new Animal into their home. It also includes support when an Animal's time has come for that last journey to the vet for euthanasia, be it driving the family to the vet's office or meeting them there to accompany them into the room where the procedure is performed, if so desired. Contact Carol at cwood453@aol.com

VOLUNTEERS AVAILABLE FOR MEALS AND RIDES. When life throws difficult things at you, your Church Family is here to help. Surgery, illness, new baby, etc., are times when you might appreciate some extra support. There are people in our congregation who have volunteered to provide meals and rides when others are in need. Contact Jeananne Stine jeanne27@gmail.com, 410-746-8605 if you need help or would like to volunteer.

NOTIFICATIONS

SPC MONTHLY HYMN SING, SUNDAY, APRIL, 4:00 PM IN THE SANCTUARY. Bring your friends and family and join us for one hour of joyful singing. Requests are honored. All are welcome; there's no need to read music.

BIBLE AT THE BAR, Thursday, April 4, 6pm, The Meck. Hosted by Pastor Gusti and Adam Ware, we grab a table and dive into your questions about the Bible, theology, and anything else you want to discuss! **April's Topic:** *The Book of Revelation*, focused specifically on Chapters 21 and 22. Based on Barbara Rossing's *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation*, which makes the case for reclaiming Christianity from fundamentalists' destructive reading of the biblical story and back into God's beloved community.

SUNDAY SEMINAR RESUMES SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 9:30 a.m. We will continue our discussion of *Know Justice Know Peace* by Deborah Egerton on Sunday, April 7, at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall and via Zoom. Please read pages 74-83 in Chapter 4. This will help you determine what your "leading type" is according to the Enneagram. Books are still available at Four Seasons Books. Mention SPC to receive a discount.

EXPLORING SPIRITUAL PRACTICES (ESP) WILL MEET WEDNESDAY, April 10, 10:30

a.m.-11:30 a.m. BY ZOOM ONLY. Our theme will be "Embracing Humor in Meditation: Finding Joy and Balance." Included will be a talk entitled, "The Transformational Power of Humor" and opportunities to reflect and share. Some brief, funny meditations will be played. All interested adult members and friends are welcome. Feel free to join us.

TEACH THE PREACHER is canceled for the next several weeks. Stay tuned for further information.

April Calendar

Sunday Schedule

8:30am	Early Service of Worship, Sanctuary
9:30am	Sunday Seminar, Fellowship Hall and Zoom
10:00am	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
11:00am	Service of Worship, Sanctuary and Facebook Live

FACEBOOK LIVE ONLINE WORSHIP, 11 a.m. Sundays. Access the service at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/spcworks> and wait for the "live stream" box (with the triangle arrow pointing to the right) to appear. THE BOX WILL NOT APPEAR BEFORE 10:50 a.m., please wait for it. Information and worship materials at the SPC website under WORSHIP, then Meeting House Live! Link is also in the 3rd paragraph. Facebook account is not required to access this service of worship.

COVID PROTOCOL: Masking is recommended but not required for those who are vaccinated. Masking remains required for those who are not vaccinated. Masking remains required for everyone when entering the church office.

- 1 Easter Monday, Church Office Closed
- 4 Presbyterian Women, Fellowship Hall, 10am
Bible at the Bar, The Meck, 6pm
- 5 Youth depart for retreat weekend at Rolling Ridge, 5pm
- 6 Service of Witness to the Resurrection, April Dowler, Sanctuary, 2:30pm
- 7 Monthly Hymn Sing, Sanctuary, 4pm
Community Meal, Zion Episcopal Church Social Center,
215 E. Washington St., Charles Town, WV 25414, 5pm
Youth return from retreat weekend, 5pm
- 10 Exploring Spiritual Practices, Zoom, 10:30am
- 11 Session Meeting, Fellowship Hall/Hybrid, 7pm
- 18 Communications Team Meeting, Fellowship Hall/Hybrid, 6pm
- 20 Men's Breakfast, Fellowship Hall, 7:30am
- 25 Deacon's Meeting, Fellowship Hall/Hybrid, 6pm
- 27 Yarns & Threads, Fellowship Hall, 1pm