

THE MESSENGER

June 2024

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church
Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

“Settling Into Summer”

As we head toward Summer Solstice
and enjoy the slower pace of life,
we find joy in community
and hope in a Spirit of Grace.

Sunday, June 2

Plucking Grain

Mark 2:23-27

Tenth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Communion

Men’s Quartet: “The Family Circle”

Sunday, June 9

More Light Sunday - On Being Non-Binary

Lesson TBD

Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time

In Consultation with Jillian Dillow

Sunday, June 16

As God Sees

1 Samuel 16:6-13

Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Graduate Recognition Sunday

Sunday, June 23

Enduring Grace

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Father’s Day Weekend

Reception of New Member

Passing the Torch - Worship Committee

Sunday, June 30

TBA

Lesson TBA

Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Special Note: The beginning of June marks the transition of Worship Committee chairperson from Debbie Romano to Mica Martin. Please extend a deep bow of gratitude to Debbie for her heroic service during the pandemic and beyond. A formal “passing the torch litany” will take place June 23 to welcome Mica to this ministry.

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

Position Vacant, 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

MAKING OUR EPYA YOUTH FEEL WELCOME

By Pat Hamilton/EPYA Leadership Team

The Eastern Panhandle Youth Alliance is a safe space meetup group for LGBTQIA+ kids, 12-18. It was started by a small group of folks—many from SPC-- to offer the young people a place to be together without fear of peer bullying or unwanted negative attention from others.

They gather for 1.5 hours, two Mondays per month, once at a church in Martinsburg and once at a location in Shepherdstown (the group has grown out of space available at SPC)*. There are 3 certified adults present at each meeting--two chaperones and one facilitator. For about half of the time there an educational activity/film/speaker and, for the remainder, the kids socialize, draw, and play games.

Not unlike SPC, the Martinsburg church is a Reconciling in Christ church (similar to More Light for Presbyterians). Their women's guild provides snacks, welcoming signs and small favors at special times of the year to the kids; a table in their gathering hall is set when the youth arrive.

EPYA's leadership team would very much like for the youth to see that support from SPC, especially since we have had to move from our Fellowship Hall.

Thanks to Jen Jones and Cathy Cross for bringing snacks for May. That said, if some folks could make some special snacks (cupcakes, cakes, sweets and savory nibbles) to reinforce our support as a church, the leadership team of EPYA knows this would be a boost for the children especially at this time when they hear so many negative things about themselves. You can bring the snacks to SPC or you might want to come to the meeting once for a little while to get a feel for the group. What you'll see is a bunch of very appreciative young people. Of course, we can always use volunteers; the training is online and takes less than an hour to complete. Our job is to keep them safe and loved.

Contact Pat Hamilton if you have any questions and/or are interested in helping (pathamilton55@gmail.com)

Dates for Shepherdstown Meetings, 6:30pm - 8pm

June 17th, July 15th and August 19th (For safety reasons, exact locations of meetings are not published)



ONE YEAR LATER: A REFLECTION ON GUNS TO GARDENS

By Leslie Williams

When the Guns to Gardens (“G2G”) steering team met for the first time back in 2022, we tried to define what ‘success’ would look like. We knew we weren’t going to ‘solve the gun violence problem.’ Heck - we weren’t going to make a meaningful dent. Ultimately, we decided that we’d have succeeded if even one gun got turned in. One less chance of an accidental death, suicide, or murder in our community... one less parent, child or loved one saddled with a lifetime of preventable grief.

That would be enough.

We’ve met that measure, having dismantled 27 guns so far. It’s been a promising beginning to what we hope will be a growing ministry. Our next event is being planned for October of this year.

But this month, as I think back to SPC’s first G2G event a year ago, I find myself most moved by things other than the guns we’ve dismantled.

First, there are the trowel and the bells that grace our communion table. Fashioned from guns and bullet casings surrendered from within our community, the tool and bells are testaments to transformation. They are also symbols of peaceful resistance against the unbearable rampage of gun violence. The bells and trowel call us out of powerlessness onto the path of peace. These symbols of hope and resolve have meant more to me than I can say.

Second, there is the miraculous way the Shepherdstown G2G event brought people from across the gun divide together. Here are three of my favorite examples.

- Jay Hurley was our first and most ardent community volunteer. Jay was an avid collector of historically significant firearms, revering them for their craftsmanship, mechanical elegance, and role in our country’s history. Yet Jay could love a thing of history and still work to stem its modern-day damage. Despite advance-stage cancer, he led and mentored our ‘tool crew’ to safely dismantle the guns. His G2G involvement was another powerful legacy that Jay has left behind.
- There was our point of contact at the Shepherdstown Fire Department, where we held our G2G event. The first time we met him, he sported a Trump ‘24 baseball cap and an NRA magazine under his arm. But our hearts had no trouble with each other. He was generous and kind toward us from beginning to end, and we hope he would say the same of us.
- There were the two deputy sheriffs assigned to us for security on the day of the event. They arrived that morning looking like they’d rather be anywhere else but here with us, a bunch of gun-destroying liberals. But as we shared work, food and time together, a palpable spirit of good humor and friendliness grew among us.

Situated at the juncture of two rivers, two states, and both sides of the Civil War, a spirit of coming-together lives in this town's soul and soil. But so does the spirit of coming apart. This place's history hard-wires us to keep deciding whether to turn away from or toward each other. In Guns to Gardens, people wildly divided over the issue of guns, chose to turn toward each other in tolerance. In collaboration. Even in true connection. If that isn't holy, I don't know what is.

And I thought Guns to Gardens was just about the guns.

A BALLPARK OUTING!



Hey, baseball fans—did you know there's a new baseball team in town? The Hagerstown Flying Boxcars, part of the North Division of the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball Clubs, are now playing at the new Meritus Park in Hagerstown, MD. Larry and Joyce Neumark will be organizing a group outing to the park in July or August. All members and friends of SPC are invited to join the group. Tickets should be less than \$20 each.

If you are interested in joining the fun and fellowship, please email the Neumarks soon at neumark@myactv.net. When we have enough people, a date will be chosen and more details provided. Come on out and support a local team. PLAY BALL!

MAY SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Discussed an opportunity to participate in "Mutual Ministry Assessment" of the Teaching Elder and the Session, facilitated by Associate General Presbyter of Shenandoah Presbytery, Rev. Nancy Meehan Yao

Received information about denominational changes to the pastor's health insurance plan
Approved the pursuit of a DHS Non-profit Security Matching Grant from the Safety Committee
Approved the request of the Mission Committee to launch an offering campaign through the summer in support of the relief efforts of World Central Kitchen in Gaza.

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

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 you 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 on Sunday morning.
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), please contact Lynn at the church office: lynn@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

Please also extend your gratitude to Debbie Romano (romano.debbie@gmail.com) for her faithful ministry of prayer these many years!

MONTHLY MEETING UPDATE. At our May Deacon meeting, we received training from Pastor Gusti on “Healthy Disclosure” practices, based on the book *Healthy Disclosure: Solving Communication Quandries in Congregations*. This training includes discerning what kinds of information are considered: personal, confidential, open, and public. We also prioritized objectives that emerged from our March Retreat, with a focus on inviting face to face and/or Zoom connections with the individuals in our flocks by the end of July.

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. 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.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Year-to-Date Budget at a Glance – as of April 30, 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 (four months)

\$125,646	Total Income (Pledges, Additional Giving, Special Offerings)
<u>\$124,082</u>	Total Expenses (Pastor, Personnel, Property, Mission, Administration, Worship, Social Justice, Education, Special Offerings)
*\$1564	NET INCOME

Budgeted (annual)

\$319,800	Total Income
<u>\$357,873</u>	Total Expenses
* - \$38,073	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.

NOTIFICATIONS

JOB OPENING AT SPC We are recruiting for a part-time Choir Director to lead the adult choir. For more information about the job and how to apply, go to <https://www.shepherdstownpresbyterian.org/about-us/job-openings/choir-director>

COMMUNITY MEAL, JUNE 2. Please drop off hot food at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church (back parking lot kitchen door) between 3:45 - 4:15 pm THAT Sunday. Leave perishable items in SPC refrigerator anytime, marked "Community Dinner." There are labels on the refrigerator door for this purpose. Contact **Diana & Matthew Patterson at spccommunitymeal@gmail.com** for more information. Please also consider taking over the Coordinator position starting in September. The commitment is about 3-6 hours a month. My family and I will be stepping down after serving in the position for one year. We have enjoyed being of service and will continue to contribute occasionally. ***Meals need to feed 50 people.***

JUNE CALENDAR

Sunday Schedule

- 8:30am Early Service of Worship, Sanctuary
- 11:00am Service of Worship, Sanctuary and Facebook Live
Sunday Studio, Children K through Fifth Grade, Classroom 1

FACEBOOK LIVE ONLINE WORSHIP, 11 a.m. Sundays. The live stream will be posted to Pastor Gusti's Facebook page (Gusti Linnea Newquist). Pastor Gusti will then "share" the live stream to the SPC group page. Please look for this shared post from Pastor Gusti at approximately 10:50 a.m. YOU NO LONGER NEED TO BE logged into a Facebook account to attend live. We are working to offer a longer-term fix as soon as possible.

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.

- 2 Food drop off for Community Meal, kitchen, 3:45pm
Community Meal, Zion Episcopal Church Social Center,
215 E. Washington St., Charles Town, WV 25414, 5pm
- 6 Handbell Rehearsal, upstairs area outside of the choir room, 9am
Bible at the Bar, The Meck, 6pm
- 13 Handbell Rehearsal, upstairs area outside of the choir room, 10am
Session Meeting, Fellowship Hall/Hybrid, 7pm
- 15 Men's Breakfast, Fellowship Hall, 7:30am
- 19 Juneteenth Observance, Church Office Closed
- 20 Handbell Rehearsal, upstairs area outside of the choir room, 10am
- 26 Staff Meeting, Fellowship Hall, 12:30pm
- 27 Handbell Rehearsal, upstairs area outside of the choir room, 10am
Deacon's Meeting, Fellowship Hall, 5pm
Communications Team Meeting, Classroom 1 (in person only), 6pm
- 29 Yarns & Threads Group, Fellowship Hall, 1pm