



THE MESSENGER

October 2024

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church
Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

PASTOR'S NOTE: ROOTED, GROUNDED, ENRICHED!

Dear friends,

Here at SPC, we say we are *rooted in the Way of Jesus and are enriched by wisdom from all sources*. A Season of Creation through the month of October invites us to connect this “rooted enrichment” with the very ground on which we worship. A Litany of Creation for three Sundays (October 13, 20, 27) will accompany our Autumnal journey through the SPC Identity Statement this month. Please come to worship each Sunday with a small container of the element of creation that is our focus for the day.

Perhaps the element will come from land on which you dwell, perhaps from a park or along the river. We will invite the children to combine their elements together during First Pew and engage the entire congregation in a Litany of Creation with the elements later in the service. Containers of elements will be provided for anyone who is not able to bring their own. You may also submit readings for use in the Litany of Creation for each element (to Lynn Dampman in the church office): October 13: earth; October 20: water; October 27: plants.

In addition, I continue to invite the congregation to submit your own suggestions for poetry, prayers, quotes *et cetera* to accompany the worship themes each week (to Lynn Dampman in the church office): October 6: Meaning, Hope, Belonging; October 13: Faith & Practice; October 20: The Way of Jesus; October 27: Wisdom from All Sources

As we recommit to Creation - and our SPC Identity as *part* of Creation - we also re-commit ourselves to the care and flourishing of this community. In early October each member household will receive a Stewardship Letter and Pledge Form for 2025, highlighting our theme: *Focus On The Future*. Moments for Stewardship in worship throughout the month will highlight the impact of your pledges on our commitments to mission and advocacy, children and youth, worship technology, and equity in staff salaries and benefits. Please pledge as generously as you are able - up to a 5% increase if possible - to help build this long term vision for SPC.

With great love,
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, 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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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

OCTOBER WORSHIP AT SPC

Worship throughout Autumn at SPC will focus various components of
The SPC Identity Statement:

*We are an inclusive spiritual community and welcome all who long for meaning, hope, and belonging.
Our faith and practice are rooted in the Way of Jesus and are 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.*

Sunday, October 6

The Welcome Table

Matthew 9:10-12

Peacemaking/World Communion Sunday
On Meaning, Hope, Belonging
Reception to Welcome Sheila Melendez

"Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Sunday, October 13

Where Our Treasure Is

Matthew 6:19-21

Twenty-Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Indigenous Peoples' Sunday
On Faith and Practice

"Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

A Litany of Creation reminds us, We Are One Earth (soil)

Sunday, October 20

Who We Love

Matthew 5:43-48

Twenty-Ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time
On The Way of Jesus

"I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

A Litany of Creation reminds us, We Drink From One Well (water)

Sunday, October 27

Before the Beginning

Proverbs 8:22-31

Reformation Sunday
On Wisdom from All Sources

When there were no depths I, wisdom, was brought forth.

A Litany of Creation reminds us, We Share One Breath (plants)

INTERVIEW WITH PASTOR GUSTI LINNEA NEWQUIST

by Sarah Wagner

On Saturday September 7, 2024, I met with Pastor Gusti in her SPC office. We had a lovely, in-depth conversation about her first five years at SPC, the challenges she's faced, the blessings she sees for all of us, and her hopes for the next five years. Here are the lightly edited highlights of that conversation:

The pandemic began just five months after you arrived as the new pastor at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church. How did that affect your start here?

I spent the first five months learning about SPC, its leaders, and its systems. I was not at the point yet of building the deeper personal and pastoral relationships. The pandemic delayed that relationship-building until almost now; the natural way it happens between a pastor and Church didn't happen. I consider that a loss, but also a thread that we need to pick up now. My number one--our number one priority is to do just that: Be Church.

But even with that loss, the thing we gained was a whole new understanding of how to be Church. We came out further ahead than many other congregations. My sense is that that was because of people's commitment to SPC. I don't actually think we have lost as much as it feels like we've lost. Our community is strong, even if it's not seen in attendance on a Sunday morning. We have had to reimagine what Church is and what it looks like. This reimagining of what our community is is a part of the next five years.

What have been some highlights of your five years here?

Throughout and after the pandemic, we've shown ourselves to be agile and strong and resilient. Our congregation is unique in its mission, its open theology, its creativity, and its commitment to the world and to inclusivity. The [physical] space itself has an energy that we have a luxury and a responsibility of tapping into.

I appreciate our openness to wisdom from all sources, though grounded in Christianity. It's been a gift to be able to be open about being a Reiki Master in a group of highly educated people. And I wasn't expecting [our congregation] to grow! We grew during Covid, with younger families and other folks joining online. This comes back to the idea of "reimagining" what the Church is for us. We need to be who we are differently to reach the new generation.

What expectations did you have when coming to SPC? Have they been met or are they in the process of being met?

I knew that turnover would happen, but of course I didn't realize that I wouldn't be able to build relationships. It takes time to learn what a congregation is like and what questions they have. I have sincere regret for having lost that time to learn early, but deep gratitude for how we've thrived, and a conviction that our thriving has to look different than it used to.

I also understood that building a central focus on social justice work and connecting it explicitly to our Biblical faith was going to take conversation and guidance. [In addition], the governance structure at SPC was not as formally Presbyterian as I have been accustomed to. Now, we are finally able to navigate how to meet each other where we are, toward the end of making the Church function to its fullest capacity.

I also had every expectation that it would take the people in our Church five years to develop a new sense of community with me, following a 42-year pastor. Following Randy was going to be hard and I'm so grateful to him for his support. He's my favorite former pastor! None of my fears about following someone so long-term have come to pass, which is a real gift.

Along with that, it was so hard when Ethel [former Director of Spiritual Formation] left the congregation. She had a deep and powerful ministry here, and we weren't able to truly celebrate what she meant to us because of the pandemic. Beyond the Church, the Ministerial Association is starting to regularly meet again and I'm beginning to build these relationships.

What is your vision for our Church for the next five years?

I envision sharing the care: building a network, including deacons and others in the SPC community, and implementing and strengthening the inclusion of new generations into the Church and its leadership. I also believe we have a leading role to play in addressing the climate crisis in this state and region--in how we live and how we respond as a community to the crisis and the upcoming changes it will bring to all of us. The climate crisis is a spiritual crisis--we are disconnected from the Earth and from Creation.

We have a story to tell about the Civil War, too. We have a witness to make through this congregation about both the trauma of civil war and how to heal from it. We were a slave-holding Church and we're in the process of transforming that evil and repairing the harm. It will be a long journey, but we are committed to it and that makes me proud to be your pastor.

What is one wish that you have for SPC and our congregation?

I wish that you could love yourselves the way that I see God loving you.

What effect has the first five years here at SPC had on your ministry?

I work a lot more from home now and am comfortable with working from home, which may or may not be a good thing. As an introvert, I have realized how much I need time for introspection. I'm doing a lot of inner work and trusting that that inner work will benefit the whole congregation. (I've been told by my therapist it will!)

I'm really proud of us. It's not easy for a Church to make the kind of transition that we've had to: you, from Randy to me, and me learning how to serve you. There've been challenges for all of us, and it's been hard, but we've done it. We've stuck with it and we've been faithful. At the end of the day, that's all God asks: just to be faithful to the moment.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH UPDATE

Christa Mastrangelo Joyce

Director of Children and Youth Formation

The children of Sunday Studio closed this summer's focus on "Honoring Creation" with a gorgeous "completed" banner that the church will get to view in October. Now, our focus is moving to the lesson of "Walk Humbly." Walking humbly means "drawing closer to God and intentionally living more and more into our identity as children of God." These lessons ask that we set aside preoccupations with wealth, reputation, and power and instead accept our own limitations while celebrating and appreciating the multitude of gifts that others offer. We turn from ourselves, are quiet, and listen to the voices of others and of God. There are numerous stories and passages in the Bible that offer a reminder of the dynamics of the relationship between God and humanity. One of these is from Micah 6:8 which asks, "What does the Lord require of you? To do justice and to love kindness / and to walk humbly with your God."

In youth group news, we worked on the beautiful grounds of Rolling Ridge for their fall volunteer cleanup day. This enabled us to spend some special time with Kristen and Joel Blunk who have come to mean so much to our whole group. We also helped split and stack wood, clear the community garden space, and clean the retreat house, then finished our time with a wonderful community lunch. The remainder of this month has been spent arranging our youth group space in the church basement and planning for our year ahead. The Sunday Studio kiddos have also participated in the Junior Ranger program at Antietam National Battlefield to commemorate Antietam Remembrance Sunday.

In the spirit of community, we are hopeful that some of our older members will share their heart and love for SPC and the way of Jesus with the Sunday Studio children. We need folks to support us as teachers and can think of no better people than the elders of this church to share their wisdom and energy with these amazing kiddos. Please reach out to Christa: 401-440-0279 or christa@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org.



CHOIR TAKES OFF WITH NEW CHOIR DIRECTOR

by Sharon Henderson

New choir director Sheila (pronounced Shay-la) Melendez feels she has found a good place at SPC: “I came one Sunday when I was looking at available church positions and found the people friendly, welcoming and respectful. I’m happy to be here.”

Church singing has always been part of Sheila’s life. “My mother taught me to sing in church. In college I worked as a paid section leader, and the director trusted me to warm up the choir. That got me hooked. I also had the opportunity to lead a children’s choir. These successful experiences showed me that I can do this.”

“I was a music worship leader in high school, leading and directing rehearsals. When I started my professional singing career, I found that sacred music was special for me. Later, when I started working with church choirs, it felt so special to be singing for a higher purpose, making music together for something greater than making a beautiful sound. This environment has been the most divine music experience, and I find comfort being part of it.”

“I think this choir is willing to grow and learn and I felt the members receptive to new things and change. I hope we can recruit more members and get to the level where we can do larger works of music in the service and collaborate with other church choirs.”

“Everyone is welcome,” says Sheila. “No audition necessary. Come and try it. I find that singing is another way of praying with the whole body. “

Choir rehearsals are held every Wednesday, 7 pm. Anyone interested in joining is invited to attend.



SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR NEWCOMERS TO JEFFERSON COUNTY

by Pat Hamilton

For the Immigrant and Refugee Support Committee

The Immigrant and Refugee Support Committee would like to thank everyone at SPC and beyond who stepped up in a big way to donate school supplies for newcomers to Jefferson County Schools. We were able to assemble 15 complete backpacks with the supplies required of the older students on their first day. We also had six extra backpacks and a variety of school supplies for those who have yet to arrive.

Brooke Biggie, school counselor and faculty advisor for the Hispanic/Latino Student Association, told us they are wonderful and will be a big help to all of the students, many of whom are new to this country. School supply drives are often directed toward younger students while the needs of middle and high school students are often overlooked. Moreover, students are frequently arriving from different countries and can be overwhelmed with the preparations for this new experience.

As always, when we ask, SPC is there. Thank you.



THE WHAT AND WHY OF GUNS TO GARDENS

by Leslie Williams

What is Guns to Gardens (G2G)?

Guns to Gardens is a nationwide program in which people can safely surrender unwanted firearms and have them transformed into garden tools or art. Last year, SPC sponsored the first-ever G2G event in WV. Gun owners from the Eastern Panhandle, Virginia, and Maryland voluntarily surrendered 25 firearms. This year's event will be held on October 12, from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., at the Shepherdstown Fire Department.

G2G is not an “anti-gun” project; its goal is not to take guns away from those who want them. Rather, it's a community service for gun owners who no longer want the guns they have, and who like the idea of transforming life-taking guns into life-giving tools.

Why do people participate?

In the US gun culture, firearms often hold great meaning for their owners. Therefore, the motivation to surrender a gun is often deeply personal:

“My husband was a hunter, but I’m afraid of guns. Once he died, I just wanted them out of the house.”

“I’m concerned about gun violence and I want to be part of the solution.”

“After my son committed suicide, the police returned to us the gun he used to kill himself. We need to get rid of this horrible reminder.”

“Our grandchildren are spending more time with us, and we want to prevent any chance of accidents.”

“At this age, I just don’t need a gun anymore, and I worry about my ability to handle it safely.”

Does it do any good?

Critics of Guns to Gardens often say, “Guns to Gardens isn’t going to stop mass shootings – so why bother?” While mass shootings dominate our national attention on guns, suicide is a much greater threat to human life, especially in West Virginia. 70% of all gun deaths in West Virginia are suicides, a rate almost 20% higher than the national average. 57% of all gun deaths among children and teens are suicides, a rate 26% higher than the national average. Take that in.

These lives are taken, not with AR-15s, but with the pistols and rifles available in the average gun owner’s home. So, when it comes to suicide prevention, every gun surrendered is a direct and meaningful act to protect the sanctity of life in our state.

To support our upcoming G2G event, check out the weekly bulletin inserts this month. For information or conversation, contact any G2G Steering Team member: Leslie Williams, Jeananne Stine, Terry Tucker and Dave Smith. Or email us at guns2gardens@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org.



HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY MEAL

by Joyce Neumark

The Community Meal is a mission outreach program in Jefferson County, but did you ever wonder how it got started? In 2010 the Cold Weather Shelter opened; the men's shelter was at Zion Episcopal Church, followed by the women and children's shelter at St. James Catholic Church. The Jefferson County Homeless Coalition started thinking that not only did these people need shelter, they also needed to be fed. Although the Community Meal program does not fall under the Jefferson County Community Ministries, JCCM is kind enough to hand out a meal schedule, provided by the Community Meal organizers, to their clients.

Zion Episcopal had been offering a Once-a-Month Free Community meal for a long time and decided to serve dinner as well. St. James joined the program and then other community churches started offering shelter space and/or meals. In the early years, during the meals the people sat at tables and the volunteers sat and had conversations with them.

When COVID came along, the program had to suspend its availability of dine-in meals and started serving outside as a prepacked takeout. This was so important as many recipients had lost their jobs during this time and needed help in feeding their families. The recipients were very grateful that the mission was able to continue.

Our own Bert Wright served as SPC Coordinator for eight years beginning in 2015. In addition to SPC and other churches, she invited community members to be involved in preparing and serving the meals. At that time, the program served 10-15 people with SPC providing meals on the first Sunday of every month at Zion Episcopal Church Social Center. Currently there are 18 churches, 3 Friends' groups, and 2 business organizations involved in this important mission, which now serves between 60-70 people every day. Most groups serve once a month; however, there are some who serve multiple times per month. This project provides a nutritious, daily meal to those in need 365 days a year. There are approximately 20-30 members of SPC who generously provide food during the year.

The Patterson family coordinated this effort for a year and the torch has now passed to Lee Doty. You will find an interview with her below. Lee wants to clarify that although 60-70 people are fed, you do not need to prepare food to serve that many! She states that if you prepare a casserole dish that would serve 15, she would need only four casseroles. Please keep that in mind when you consider being involved. And Kaz Feldstein, who heads the entire program, says, "Your church brings a great dinner every month, people love it."



MEET OUR NEW COMMUNITY MEAL COORDINATOR -

LEE DOTY

by Larry and Joyce Neumark

Not only is Lee new to the Community Coordinator job, she is a relatively new member of SPC. She joined the congregation in November 2023. In the past, when we have done interviews, we ask questions and then put the answers in narrative form. When we asked Lee to answer our questions, her answers were so interesting that we decided to share them in her own words. 9

Where did you grow up? Are you a native West Virginian?

I was born in Atlanta, Georgia, but grew up in Briarcliff Manor, New York, which is about an hour north of NYC. We moved around in New York state as our family grew (there were eventually 5 children in my family), and spent a couple of years in Louisville, KY, because of my father's job with Merrill Lynch.

What brought you to Shepherdstown?

My husband introduced me to Capon Springs and Farms, an old hotel/resort outside Wardensville, WV, and we've spent one week there every year with our family for nearly 40 years. So that was my introduction to some of the marvels of West Virginia. We initially retired to Cape Cod, MA—built a house and everything—but soon realized we were too far away from our grandchildren (now ten of them), most of whom live in the Washington, DC, area. We looked for a wonderful place close, but not too close, to them and that brought us to the Eastern Panhandle of WV.

What made you decide to take over the Community Meal coordinator job?

I've spent overnights in the SPC unhoused program and I've gotten so much from that experience. Providing meals seemed like a logical extension of that activity.

Tell us about your family--spouse/children/grandchildren. Do they live nearby?

My husband Ralph, a former congressional staffer, sang in church choirs for close to 60 years, plays piano, and serves on the Friends of Music Board. He also gets roped into helping me with every activity I undertake without complaint. We have five children (we're a blended family) and, as noted, ten grandchildren. All are in the DC area except one in Wilmington, NC. I'm a retired lawyer. In Washington, DC, I served as Children's Hospital's General Counsel, then moved to Philadelphia to become General Counsel to the Graduate Health System. I then worked in two large law firms, started my own firm, then wound up my career as General Counsel for Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey. In retirement, I write the Norma Bergen mystery series.

Do you have any hobbies/interests/sports that you enjoy? What do you do in your "down" time? *I lead two writer retreats through the Lifelong Learning Program, work with the Brady United-WV program, write books and take care of my grandchildren. I also love to take walks in this beautiful town.*

Is there anyone (past or present) whom you admire?

I admire so many people (Abe Lincoln is right up there), but closer to home are my parents, now deceased, and my husband.

Do you have any favorite books or films?

Favorite books--To Kill a Mockingbird, Middlemarch, Pride and Prejudice, Strong Poison, An Unsuitable Job for a Woman and A Gentleman in Moscow are a few. I confess--Gone with the Wind is another favorite. Favorite movies--Casablanca, African Queen, and Gone with the Wind.

We thank Lee so much for her responses and a glimpse into her background. We urge everyone to support her in her new role as Community Meal Coordinator. Please watch the weekly E-News to see how to participate in this endeavor.



SEPTEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Stewardship Campaign:** We discussed this year's stewardship campaign and the need to boost pledging, which is vital to the annual budget process. The session agreed to request donations to replenish the building fund.
- **Guns to Gardens:** We received an update on the Guns to Gardens event scheduled for October 12. We encourage giving to the special offering during September to support the event.
- **Visiting Pastor to Focus on Food Insecurity:** We are excited to welcome Rev. Rebecca Barnes, Coordinator of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, on November 16-17. Rev. Barnes will participate in a Saturday workshop on local food issues and preach on food insecurity on Sunday. The visit is sponsored by SPC's Matthew 25 Project.
- **Cold Weather Shelter:** We are looking for volunteers for SPC to serve as a cold weather shelter for a couple of weeks during November and December. Contact John Gonano or Bill Rule for more information.
- **Staffing-up the Nursery:** We approved adding to the nursery attendant pool to ensure sufficient staff are available on Sundays.
- **New Flooring in the Upstairs Fellowship Hall:** With Daryl Kuster's help, we are investigating how best to replace the flooring on the second floor of the FH.
- **Co-Sponsoring the Documentary *Momma Bears*:** We will join the Social Equity and Multicultural Student Affairs office at Shepherd University to sponsor the showing of the documentary *Momma Bears* on Friday, October 11, at 7pm. The documentary features Christian mothers who advocate for their LGBTQ children. (For more information on the documentary [Mama Bears | Conservative, Christian Mothers Champion Their LGBTQ+ Children \(pbs.org\)](https://www.pbs.org/shows/momma-bears/))
- **Congregational Meeting:** The Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for December 8.

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.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

BUDGET AT A GLANCE THROUGH August 31, 2024

Actual (7 months)

\$215,635	Total Income (Pledges, Additional Giving, Special Offerings)
<u>\$245,175</u>	Total Expenses (Pastor, Personnel, Property, Mission, Administration, Worship, Social Justice, Education, Special Offerings)
-\$29,540	NET INCOME*

Budgeted (annual)

\$330,032	Total Income
<u>\$368,681</u>	Total Expenses
-\$38,074	NET INCOME*

Unrestricted Reserves \$205,295

BUDGET NOTES

*With an increase in pledges for 2024 and the stability of SPC reserves, the Session voted to maintain current strategic investments in mission and advocacy, ministry and children and youth, and online worship capacity.

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

We welcome John Gonano as the new Stewardship Committee chair.

DEACON TEAM UPDATE

Donna Dettling, Deacon Moderator Partner

Imagine gathering in a circle around the communion table in our sacred sanctuary. Dusk is approaching and that perfect light, coupled with a single candle, are all that illuminate the space. Doesn't this sound like the perfect setting for a conversation about prayer? Beginning with our August Deacon meeting, and continuing for the next couple months, Pastor Gusti is helping us develop and deepen our practice of prayer. In August, this was a rich and meaningful discussion about what prayer means to us, and how we feel about praying aloud with others.

In August, we also made decisions about our next project, a **Deacon Bulletin Insert**, which will introduce the congregation and our visitors to the Deacon Team, the purpose and responsibilities of the deacons, and how they strive to partner with their flock. We determined what we want the congregation to know, feel, and do when they read the **Insert**, and we laid out the basic design of the form. We hope to have this publication completed in the next month or two.

At our September meeting, we continued development work to expand our knowledge and comfort level around the act of prayer. There was a presentation by the **Threshold Singers**, and a discussion of how we might partner with them as needs arise in the congregation. We reviewed our 2024 retreat outcomes, prioritized our next team efforts, and began planning our Spring 2025 retreat.

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:

- 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.
- Please indicate whether or not you would like this request to be shared in worship on Sunday morning.
- 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.)



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

by Donna Dettling, Co-Moderator

Presbyterian Women (PW) had a great start to the 2024-25 year, with 14 women in attendance (9 in person and 5 on Zoom) on September 5. Diana Eldridge moderated the meeting and Suellen Myers led the discussion on the introductory sections of the book ***Always with Us? – What Jesus Really Said about the Poor***, by Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis. While the book may be challenging to read and understand, we hope to supplement our study using other resources and activities to enhance our conversations around poverty.

At our **October 3 meeting**, Diana Eldridge will invite us into dialogue about Chapter 1 of the book. As you read the chapter, we encourage you to make note of anything that resonates with you, confuses you, or inspires you.

We will also ask everyone to share thoughts on how we can make our discussions on poverty more meaningful – possible sources we might use, projects we could undertake, and partnerships we could form. We will consider ways to share or utilize the Sunday Seminar lessons on poverty, which began on September 22, to add another layer to our PW meetings. And we will think about how we might make our group more accessible for those who aren't able to participate on a weekday morning.

Whether or not you have the book, you are more than welcome to attend the meetings and join in the conversations and work of the group. We value your presence among us! If you have any thoughts ahead of the next meeting, please email me at donna.dettling@gmail.com.

Thank you to all who participated in and volunteered for the first meeting. We appreciate you and hope to see you on **October 3 at 10:00 in the Fellowship Hall (or on Zoom)**.



PAWS AND CLAWS HOWL-O-WEEN

DINNER AND AUCTION

by Carol Wood

Deacon for Animals

Since becoming the Deacon for the Animals here at SPC, many of you have asked me questions about the Animal Welfare Society (AWS). I thought it might be helpful to share some history of the shelter and activities that take place throughout the year to raise funds for the facility.

AWS was incorporated in 1952 to help homeless cats and dogs in Jefferson County. Since 1985, AWS has housed unwanted and homeless pets. Over the years, improvements have been made to the interior of the building. The space for the cats has been organized and enlarged and the dog kennels received a fresh coat of paint and spaces enlarged as well. As a no kill shelter, the staff working and caring for the animals have their hands very full.

AWS is a non-profit 501[c3] organization and relies solely on donations, grants and fundraisers to support the shelter and its programs. Along with housing, AWS provides veterinarian care, spaying and neutering for each shelter cat and dog prior to adoption; coupons are provided to the community to encourage residents to spay and neuter their own pets.

Throughout the year, AWS holds many fundraisers such as a low-cost rabies clinic, Mother's Day and Easter flower sales, yard sales, Bark in the Park and the upcoming Paws and Claws Howl-O-Ween Dinner and Auction. This event will take place October 19, in the Skyline Ballroom, Hollywood Casino, Charles Town. I have tickets available for \$70 per person. Your ticket includes a cash bar, buffet dinner, silent and live auctions, 50/50 drawings and prizes for the best Halloween costume for those who wish to participate.

The Animal Welfare Society is located at 20 Poor Farm Rd., Leetown Pike, Kearneysville, WV. The shelter is open Wednesdays through Sundays with hours that vary. So, if you are thinking about giving a forever home to one of the many cats and dogs housed in the shelter, pay them a visit. The phone number for AWS is 304-725-0589.

Calendar