

THE MESSENGER

May 2024

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church
Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

“Garden of Grace”

Eastertide at SPC continues in May

*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, May 5

A Singing Faith

Psalm 98

Sixth Sunday of Easter, Communion

Wanda Stewart: “How Great Is Our God”

Sunday, May 12

Guest Preacher Debbie Romano

Lesson TBD

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Mother’s Day

Sunday, May 19

The Wisdom of Creation

Psalm 104

Pentecost

Graduate Recognition Sunday

Reception of New Member

Men’s Quartet: “On Eagle’s Wings”

Handbell Choir: “To God Be the Glory/Broken Vessels”

Sunday, May 26

Sending and Receiving

Isaiah 6:1-8

Trinity Sunday

Memorial Day Weekend

Guest Choir Director Georgiann Toole: “Ode to the Earth”

Farewell Reception for The Burnses

Special Note: The end of May will mark 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 in June 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
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

MATTHEW 25 INITIATIVE UPDATE - COMMUNITY CUP COFFEE & MORE

The article below appeared as one of eight features in the May 2024 issue of The Presbyterian Outlook. "1001 Worshiping Communities: Creating Connection Through Innovative Worship"

Community Cup Coffee and More is tucked into the Appalachian foothills in the little town of Martinsburg, West Virginia. It might look like a coffee shop outside, but inside the business offers a place of radical welcome, hope and compassion.

In a community afflicted by homelessness and addiction, Community Cup Coffee's pastor, Dwight McCormick, says the need is great. Many of the individuals McCormick serves are unhoused, either in recovery or in need of recovery. The coffee house offers an open space where they can find fellowship and resources.

Those resources are holistic. The shop offers good food and coffee at low prices for all. Bathrooms and charging stations are available. McCormick and his team help provide transportation for things like hospital visits, doctor's appointments or transfers between shelters. McCormick has also partnered with social services; social workers come in regularly to help people assess the resources they need. During the winter, McCormick keeps the shop open a little later to let people spend a few more hours out of the cold.

Beyond providing resources, Community Cup seeks to meet the basic human need of connection by creating opportunities for fellowship. Friday nights are evenings of worship, gathering everyone around the Communion Table. Songs are sung, Scripture is read, and participants delight in the company of one another. During Ash Wednesday 2024, the shop had standing room only. The shop also hosts trivia nights. A local school displays art in the cafe, and a bluegrass jam session meets regularly as well. Community Cup is truly a hub for the community.

McCormick said sustainability is a big concern. The shop is heavily supported by grants, but it must continually plan ahead to remain in operation. The team has networked hard within the community to foster broad ecumenical support for the shop.

When asked what he's learned, McCormick shared, "The need is great. It's one thing to preach about those on the margins in church on a Sunday. But it's another thing altogether to spend every day of the week with these folks. Up close you can see how truly great the need is."

McCormick added, "I think a lot about that verse in James: 'If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?' And that really sticks with me as I do this work."

This theology has shaped McCormick and the good work he and his team do at Community Cup. If you're ever passing through, you'll surely be greeted with a warm smile and a friendly hello as you step through the door.

MATTHEW 25 INITIATIVE UPDATE - TOWN RUN WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

By Kay Schultz

Creation believes in us and knows that we are capable of doing what it will take to mend, heal, and repair this farm called Earth.

The Matthew 25 invitation focuses on Matthew 25: 31-46, 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.

We are called to serve Jesus by contributing to the well-being of the most vulnerable in all societies. From affordable housing to community gardens to equitable educational and employment opportunities to healing from addiction and mental illness to enacting policy change and protecting our planet, there is not just one way to be a part of the Matthew 25 movement.

As we seek to be good stewards of God's creation, water can be a powerful path for learning, for protection of public and ecosystem health, for advocacy of needed local, state and federal policy, and for restoration and repair. A growing understanding of our inter reliance upon the natural world fosters our recognition of kinship with all beings and builds a deeper and broader understanding of ways we can better protect our beloved planet.

We at SPC can join the local Town Run Watershed Group, Potomac Valley Audubon Society and others in making a commitment to protect and enhance Town Run, the local spring fed stream, that will soon be a part of our local drinking water supply. Town Run is critical for water quality, stream flow, public health, ecosystem health and for its contribution to the shared natural beauty, aesthetics and recreational pleasures of Shepherdstown.

We Can Join Others

- To build greater understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities to our community's drinking water and ecosystem health without a well-protected and managed Town Run Watershed.
- To instill a sense of community connection to the watershed resources that call landowners and planning efforts to consider best management practices for protecting the healthy function and drinking water of the Town Run Watershed.
- To improve the understanding of the multiple benefits of protecting the watershed that include improving and/or maintaining property values, supporting public health and vitality, safeguarding resilient and biodiverse ecosystems.

We Can Collectively Address Multiple Problems

- Lack of awareness that the Town Run is critical to community health
- Pollution of groundwater that supplies this spring fed stream from septic systems, industrial facilities like Rockwool, agricultural operations, and new construction projects

- Runoff from streets and parking lots, lawns, and yards
- Bank erosion
- Invasive plants
- Inadequate vegetated buffers along the Run
- Trash

We Can Each Be Better Earth Stewards

- Maintenance and pumping of septic systems
- Reducing lawn areas and adding more native plants and trees
- Slowing down stormwater, pooling and absorbing and filtering it before it flows off our lots
- Using fewer chemicals, relying upon biology instead of chemistry
- Planting vegetated buffers along the stream
- Filtering stormwater runoff from streets and parking lots before it enters the stream
- Removing invasive plants and trash
- Learn about resources and spread the word to encourage the conservation and protection of landscapes in the Town Run watershed from further development by educating landowners about available conservation easements and cost share programs.

We Can be Advocates for Natural Resource Priorities

Learn about the 2024 revision of the ten-year Shepherdstown Comprehensive Plan:

- o Developing a watershed management plan for Town Run
- o Implementing a Tree Canopy Plan
- o Developing and implementing a Land Conservation Plan
- o Promoting Farmland Preservation
- o Promoting Rainwater Harvesting for irrigation
- o Developing a pervious pavement requirement

We Can Build Our Earth Care Capacity

- Delight in the Stream! Its sound and beauty are a distinctive feature of Shepherdstown!
- Be a part of the solution - choose where to begin – at home or in the Community
- Become a Stream Monitor
- Volunteer
- Become a Friend of Town Run, a PVAS Master Naturalist, a Scout, etc.
- Spread the word!

You are invited to link to the current revision of the Shepherdstown Comprehensive Plan from The Observer <https://wearetheobserver.com/shepherdstown-comp-plan-2024/>

For more information, see the Town Run Watershed website [Home - Town Run Watershed](#), or feel free to email me at kay.nixschultz@gmail.com.



A FOND FAREWELL

By Larry and Joyce Neumark

Although our two previous interviews have been with new faces, we now choose to spotlight two long-time and beloved members of SPC, John and Helen Burns. They will soon be departing Shepherdstown, their home since 2003, for a new one at Buckingham's Choice, an all-care facility located in Adamstown, MD.



Helen was born in Cleveland, Ohio. Her parents, impacted by the Depression, survived by growing and preserving most of their food and they even had a cow! Her grandmother lived with the family and raised chickens so they could have lots of fresh eggs. Helen graduated from Ohio University with a business degree and then later with a computer science degree from the University of Maryland. Her career included working as a secretary and much later as a computer analyst-programmer. Speaking of her family, she says, "Altogether, we are a family of 19, including spouses. Our ages range from soon-to-be-born to age 95! It's a lot of fun to have six great-grandchildren."

John, born in Washington, DC, lived in Arlington, VA. During WWII, his father was in the Army Air Corps and the family was stationed in Warner Robins, GA, near Macon. John attended Arlington schools, remained in close contact with his classmates, participated in class reunions, and still runs the class website. Graduating from Cornell University with a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering (a five-year program), he later received his Master's degree from Cornell in that same field. Careerwise, he worked at the Johns Hopkins University/Applied Physics Lab in telemetry data processing, then joined a small computer firm doing work in signal processing, and finally owned his own company, consulting in signal processing systems such as sonar, radar, and CAT scanning. Regarding his family, John has a son who is married and lives in Massachusetts. His daughter passed away from Covid in 2021.

John and Helen met when both were active in Colesville Presbyterian Church in Silver Spring, MD, and were married in 1996. The appeal of a small university town and being close to Helen's family were their reasons for moving to Shepherdstown. They were attracted to SPC when they "attended a service and saw Randy Tremba dressed in a tee shirt and sandals and liked the informal ambiance."

Both have been quite active in SPC. Helen was in the Presbyterian Women, coordinated breakfast for the Cold Weather Shelter, and was an active deacon. John served as property chair and head usher, each for nine years, and coordinated the Moveable Feast supper group for 17 years. Additionally, along with others, John started the Men's Breakfast around 2005.

Both are avid travelers, sometimes with family or SPC friends. Their list of adventures is long, and includes trips to Galapagos, Machu Picchu, China, Egypt, Africa (a safari), Romania, and Santo Domingo, to name a few. While hard to pick a "favorite," their most memorable trip might be Greece.

Their decision to move to Buckingham's Choice was based on numerous factors, including proximity (40 minutes away), the friendly, active people there, their life-care plan, and the lovely apartment where they will live. John adds: "We have few things to complain about and many things to be thankful for."

John and Helen, we are thankful for *you* and your many contributions to this faith community. You both have always stepped up when SPC has called—materially and spiritually. Your many gifts, including the lovely wooden crosses John made from 1905 reclaimed SPC pine pews as parting mementos, will always be treasured.

We wish you many more years of happiness together!

APRIL SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Received an update on Debbie Romano's Supervised Ministry Practicum at Tuscarora Presbyterian Church, beginning in August. Debbie will transition out of her volunteer roles at SPC by July 1.

Accepted the resignation of Bob Tucker as Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee

Approved the Sacrament of Baptism for Olive Lorenzen, daughter of Mary Ellen Lloyd and Harald Lorenzen

Received an update from the Communications Committee regarding a Welcome Packet

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.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH UPDATE

Christa Mastrangelo Joyce

Children and Youth Education Coordinator

Recently, a writer friend of mine reminded me that “God moves at the pace of relationship.” The time I spend returning to relationship with the marvelous youth of SPC keeps revealing this to me.

This past month was no exception. The group of youth and I continued our work discovering what it means to be church to each other. We continued our contemplative study and practice of "Loving God, Neighbor, and Enemy," with several conversations that led us to consider what or who an enemy is, what and who are our neighbors, and how do we take care of ourselves while loving deeply. We dove into the question: What does God-size love look like? We read Corinthians 1:13 to help us contemplate agape love.



During our annual retreat to the retreat at Rolling Ridge, we were energized by a variety of games intended to connect us and help us develop our relationship through play. As we hiked through the woods, I continued encouraged our youth to watch out for the experience of awe. And awe we received! Although not all of the teens love to hike, they do love to be together, and having willingly ventured out, they were gifted with the sights and

sounds of a gushing waterfall, a preserved field of Virginia bluebells and trillium flowers, and the incredible artistry that is The China Folk House, a home that was brought from China piece by piece so a faraway culture could be preserved through its walls.

We celebrated a beautiful Sunday service together in the meditation hut at Rolling Ridge, with Joel Blunk and Mary Anne Hitt leading us in song on their guitars. Then we offered our service to the land and community of Rolling Ridge by stacking wood, raking the paths around the house, and finally cleaning the space in which we'd been welcomed to stay.

Our conversations continued to reveal that we may not always understand or agree with one another and that, even though relationships can be inherently risky, we appreciate the way love and respect continue to infuse our time together.

It's in this kind of relationship that we don't have to reconcile the gorgeous and the tragic parts of life, or the flash of the momentary perfection of a field of Virginia bluebells with the perpetually imperfect notion of human connection. We get to see that these opposites don't cancel each other out.

In our story of relationship, we discover that life is so beautiful, and life is so hard. And somehow, by taking the risk to know and trust one another, we are made stronger for both the beautiful and the hard: The faith we have in each other is somehow buoying.

Evelyn Bailey expressed it like this: "The more time we take with each other, the more our relationships grow and expand. It takes a while to trust someone—and it's the same way with God."

In the meantime, SPCs youngest members were also discovering the love of God, neighbor and even foe, along with some incredible Sunday studio volunteers.

(Volunteers continue to be needed so please reach out to Christa at 401-440-0279 if you're able to be a part of this wonderful program.)



NOTIFICATIONS

VIDEO FROM APRIL 28 WORSHIP IS AVAILABLE! Deepest apologies to our online community for the technical difficulties in live-streaming the service. The recording has now been shared to the SPC Group page and is also available on vimeo: <https://vimeopro.com/spcworks/live>

TRANSITION PLANNING FOR THE PRAYERNET IS UNDERWAY. The PrayerNet will transition to a team-based approach when Debbie begins her Supervised Ministry Practicum, no later than July 1. If you are interested in participating in a team-based approach to the PrayerNet, contact Jen Jones at jenajones44@gmail.com.

PENTECOST SPECIAL OFFERING WILL BE COLLECTED DURING THE MONTH OF MAY. There are special envelopes in the pew racks, or write "Pentecost" on the memo line of your check. The offering will be split between Combined Community Ministries which supplies food to school children and PCUSA Youth Mission fund. If donating online, please include the message "Pentecost Offering."

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>

SUNDAY SEMINAR, 9:30 a.m. We will continue our discussion of *Know Justice Know Peace* by Deborah Egerton in Fellowship Hall and via Zoom. We hope you will join us on Sunday in person in Fellowship Hall or via Zoom.

COMMUNITY MEAL, May 5. 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.

SPC MONTHLY HYMN SING, SUNDAY, MAY 5, 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. This will be our last gathering until September, the monthly Hymn Sing is taking a vacation, we will not gather in June, July or August.

EXPLORING SPIRITUAL PRACTICES (ESP) WILL MEET WEDNESDAY, May 8, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. BY ZOOM ONLY. Our theme will be "Meditating with Nature." Included will be two mini-meditations, a talk entitled, "How Meditating with Nature Can Ground and Connect Us" as well as opportunities to reflect and share. The session will end with a beautiful creation-centered song. Feel free to join us.

CAROL WOOD, SPC'S DEACON SHEPHERD FOR ANIMALS, INVITES YOU to the Animal Welfare Society of Jefferson County's annual Mother's Day flower and plant sale. Friday, May 10, from 1-6 PM at Domino's, outside of Shepherdstown [rain date, May 11]. There will be some perennials, pollinator friendly plants, hanging baskets, geraniums, impatiens, lantana, foxglove, bee balm and so much more. So, come on over and show your Mom how much you care.

DEACON SHEPHERDS, Ministries of Care

THE PRAYERNET is available to share your joys and concerns throughout the week. Contact Debbie Romano at romano.debbie@gmail.com until further notice (see pg. 10 above).

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 March 31, 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 (three months)

\$102,396	Total Income (Pledges, Additional Giving, Special Offerings)
<u>\$90,062</u>	Total Expenses (Pastor, Personnel, Property, Mission, Administration, Worship, Social Justice, Education, Special Offerings)
*\$12,334	NET INCOME

Budgeted (annual)

\$318,524	Total Income
<u>\$356,597</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.

May 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.

- 2 Presbyterian Women, Fellowship Hall, 10am
Handbell Rehearsal, upstairs area outside choir room, 10am
Bible at the Bar, The Meck, 6pm
- 5 Youth Group Gathering, downstairs, 12:15pm
Food drop off for Community Meal, kitchen, 3:45pm
Monthly Hymn Sing, Sanctuary, 4pm
Community Meal, Zion Episcopal Church Social Center,
215 E. Washington St., Charles Town, WV 25414, 5pm
- 8 Guns to Gardens Steering Team Meeting, Fellowship Hall, 10am
Exploring Spiritual Practices (ESP), Zoom Only, 10:30am
- 9 Handbell Rehearsal, upstairs area outside of the choir room, 10am
Session Meeting, Fellowship Hall/Hybrid, 7pm
- 16 Handbell Rehearsal, upstairs area outside of the choir room, 10am
Communications Team Meeting, Fellowship Hall/Hybrid, 6pm
- 18 Men's Breakfast, Fellowship Hall, 7:30am
- 19 Youth Group Gathering, downstairs, 12:15pm
- 21 Choir Rehearsal, choir room, 7pm
- 23 Deacon's Meeting, Fellowship Hall, 6pm
- 25 Yarns & Threads Group, Fellowship Hall, 1pm
- 27 Memorial Day Holiday, Church office closed
- 29 Staff Meeting, Fellowship Hall, 12:30pm