



# THE MESSENGER

April 2026

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church  
Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

## APRIL SABBATICAL NEWS! REFLECTION, CONNECTION AND FUN

### LET'S REFLECT ON OUR HISTORY - ENGAGE IN THE TIMELINE!

One of the objectives of the Sabbatical Planning Team is to gain a deeper understanding of SPC's roots and honor the people and events that came before us. With that in mind, the SPC Timeline Project is underway and you will begin to see signs around the sanctuary in upcoming weeks, including window displays, which will begin after Easter. We welcome your help with this timeline, which will extend from pre-SPC times through the present, and will even explore what the future may hold!

#### HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

- **Send us quotes!** The timeline will cross the balcony to connect the two sides of the sanctuary, with a meaningful quote hung on the face of the balcony. If you can find quotes that symbolize the life and legacy of SPC and its members, or our path from past to future, please send them **by April 12** to [donna.dettling@gmail.com](mailto:donna.dettling@gmail.com) and we will choose from your submissions.
- **Provide SPC-related photos and memorabilia** from any period of time for us to use in our displays. Please give them to Donna Dettling or Keri Mahoney. We will make copies and return your materials.
- **Add your own special memories** to the timeline to establish and celebrate the importance of SPC in your life. (More information on this will be forthcoming.)

We hope this project will be filled with art and occasions, remembrance and dreams. Help us look to the future of SPC and envision our direction. To learn more, contact Donna Dettling at [donna.dettling@gmail.com](mailto:donna.dettling@gmail.com)

*Please jump over to pages 10 and 11 to find out what's going on for  
Sabbatical Connection and Fun.*

**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. Mary Jane Hitt (she/her), Sabbatical Pastor

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

Lynn Dampman (she/her), Administrative Assistant

Sheila Melendez (she/her), Choir and Handbell Director

Sam Jannotta (he/him), Accompanist

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

Camryn Monroe (she/her), Nursery Manager

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

[lynn@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:lynn@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org)

Contacting Pastor Mary Jane: Pastor Mary Jane makes every effort to respond to communications as soon as possible between the hours of 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Saturday through Thursday. Fridays are her Sabbath. If you are having a pastoral emergency, please call any time, day or night, 304-712-8700; [maryjane@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:maryjane@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org)

# WORSHIP AT SPC

April 2026

*On Easter Sunday we will conclude our “Everything In Between” series with a sermon entitled “Between Grief & Hope.” There will not be an 8:30 a.m. service on Easter, but there will be a Sunrise Service at the Rumsey Monument led by Rie Wilson at 6:30 a.m. Easter is not just one day on the church calendar. It is a whole season in the life of the church. This year that season begins on April 5 and continues through May 17.*

*On the Second Sunday of Easter, Wanda Stewart will share a reflection on her experience of the Risen Christ – the ways in which resurrection shapes her life and faith. Then, beginning April 19, worship will follow the Revised Common Lectionary, focusing on that same theme: the presence of the living Christ in our own time and place.*

**Thursday, April 2**                      **Between Power & Humility**                      Luke 22:1-27  
7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday service

**Friday, April 3**                      **The Seven Last Sayings of Jesus**  
7:00 p.m. Asbury United Methodist Church

**Sunday, April 5**                      **Between Grief & Hope**                      Luke 24:1-12  
**Easter Sunday**  
6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service – Rumsey Monument  
11:00 a.m. service - Sanctuary  
Memorial Moment  
Communion

**Sunday, April 12**                      **Reflections on the Risen Christ**                      John 20  
Second Sunday of Easter  
Wanda Stewart

**Sunday, April 19**                      **On the Road Again**                      Luke 24:13-35  
Third Sunday of Easter

**Sunday, April 26**                      **Abundant Life**                      John 10:1-10  
Fourth Sunday of Easter



## CHILDREN AND YOUTH UPDATE

**Christa Mastrangelo Joyce**  
**Director of Children and Youth Formation**

Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, our youth group members have been considering identity as they engage in the Parables of Jesus. This has paired beautifully with the education I am receiving in anticipation of receiving my Christian Educator's certification this year. These courses are forming me and informing the faith education I am offering.

Currently, my work in the course *Worship and Sacraments* is leading me to discover a deeper love for our rhythms of worship and a greater understanding of our Presbyterian sacraments of Baptism and Communion. Both are encouraging me as I prepare the youth, particularly our high school seniors, to lead the graduation service scheduled for this May.

So, friends, here is your opportunity to reflect on a similar set of ideas that the youth and I are considering:

- What is the story of your Baptism?
- Remembering that Baptism represents God's call to justice and righteousness rolling down like a mighty stream, how are you currently living this loving call?
- How are you finding courage to live in these times, remembering the call to allow God's love to flow through you?
- How is (or is not) the church supporting you in this?
- Believing that, through Baptism, we are given good news: God knows you, has claimed you, and calls you. What is the good news you could offer your church community?

If you're feeling curious or inspired by this reflection, feel free to write down your answers, send them to me at [Christa@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:Christa@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org), or perhaps bring and share a meal with us one Sunday afternoon so we can delight in conversation. The Youth and I would be delighted to discover your wisdom.



## MARCH SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

### Suellen Myers, Clerk of Session

**Session met** on March 12 at 7:00 p.m. and a quorum was declared. The meeting opened with prayer and meditation.

**Guns to Gardens** requested a special offering over the weeks of April 12 and 19 to purchase gift cards as a thank you for turning in a gun. Seconded by Lynn Coddington and **Approved**..

**The Deacons requested** that deacons and ruling elders receive training for giving communion to make it possible to take communion to people at home when the pastor is unavailable. **Approved** by consensus.

The Work in the World team asked for permission to stencil around the two storm drains behind the church. The stencil will appear around the drains and say **FLOWS TO TOWN RUN AND POTOMAC RIVER**. A scout troop led by Siri McDonald will do the stenciling. **Approved** by consensus.

**Session decided** that we should have a statement that reinforces what we say we stand for as a church. With input from Session, a draft will be written by Julie Slonaker and Lynn Coddington.

**Moderator's report** – Pastor Mary Jane reported that she and her husband Bill are settling in and enjoy living in Shepherd Village. She has found the congregation to be welcoming and forgiving. She is planning no basic changes to worship. She is aware of the sound system problem on March 8 and it is being checked. She meets once a month with the support team, Lynn Dampman and Christa Mastrangelo Joyce, who have been “enormously helpful”. She proposed that there be only one service on Easter at 11:00 a.m. **Approved** with the amendment that no one would lose pay because of the single service.

**Deacons reported** that the PrayerNet is being moved from a stand-alone program to the Deacon's Share the Care ministries.

**Adult Education** reports that Sunday seminar sessions have been well attended.

**Work in the World** – for **Earth Care** see stenciling project above. Under **Justice and Peace**, the immigrant and refugee support team offers resources and has some funds for legal fees. Contact a team member or email [workintheworldspc@gmail.com](mailto:workintheworldspc@gmail.com) for information. Funds were dispersed for Systemic Poverty to Community Markets, Inc. and for Inclusion and Equity for EPYA youth volunteer background checks and flyers for an EPYA educational program.

**Property** – A question as to what budget line to use to pay for an air purifier for the basement was referred to Budget and Finance.

**Clerk** – Communion was served February 18, 22, March 8, 15, 22, and will be served April 2 and 5 – as previously approved. With a motion from Anne Teresa, seconded by Mary Anne Hitt, the corrected minutes of the February meeting were **Approved**. It's time to update the Session by-laws and Administrative Procedures. The Clerk and Lynn Coddington will begin the process. The last update was done in 2021. The next Stated Meeting is April 9.

Pastor Mary Jane closed the meeting with prayer and it was adjourned at 8:47pm.

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



# SPC'S FINANCIAL HEALTH REPORT

## Dave Smith, Budget and Finance

The Finance Committee met to review February's financial reports, discuss stewardship and budget processes, and review suggested donations and fees specified in the building use policy.

The committee noted that revenue and expenses are in line with expectations, although there has been a tendency for general giving to be lower than last year at this time, likely due to donors shifting from general to pledged giving.

The committee is updating the stewardship and budget timeline documentation, clarifying roles and responsibilities for pledge reporting and campaign communications. The committee also examined the building use policy, particularly regarding fees and donations for various event categories, noting that current suggested donations and fees may need updating for inflation. They identified a gap in the policy regarding who can sell items and under what conditions. The committee is seeking input from the Session.

Ways to give to SPC:

- In the offering plate during worship
- By mail - Make checks payable to Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church and mail to:  
PO Box 268, Shepherdstown, WV 25443
- Online - If you would like to make an online donation, please go to:  
[www.shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](http://www.shepherdstownpresbyterian.org) and use the GIVE icon in the upper right on the home page or use the QR code. You may donate through PayPal, debit or credit card or Venmo.



### BUDGET AT A GLANCE THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2026

<b>Income and Expenses</b>	<b>2026 Budget (12 Months)</b>	<b>Actuals* through February 28</b>	<b>Actuals as % of the 12-Month Budget</b>
<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>\$358,589</b>	<b>\$83,143</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$397,841</b>	<b>\$69,865</b>	<b>18%</b>

\* Actuals include major gifts



## DEACON

## DEACON TEAM UPDATE

Donna Dettling, Deacon Moderator

### **\*\*AUTISM ACCEPTANCE WORKSHOP\*\***

The Workshops and Educational Events Ministry (one of the deacon's Share the Care Ministries,) is hosting an **Autism Acceptance Workshop on Sunday, April 26, from 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall and on Zoom.** A group of panelists will present segments on understanding, accepting, and accommodating neurodiverse individuals, followed by a period of Q and A. After this conversation, we will ask you to consider and share ways SPC might be more welcoming to those of all abilities. A light lunch and beverages will be served. Please RSVP to [donna.dettling@gmail.com](mailto:donna.dettling@gmail.com).

### **PrayerNet**

Please send your prayer requests to [prayernet@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:prayernet@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org). You may also call the church office at 304-876-6466 during office hours (Monday - Friday, 8am - 2pm) or request the prayer through the SPC website at [Community of Care | Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church](#). A couple of practical reminders as you make your requests:

1. Please make sure the person for whom you are requesting prayer has given their permission. Due to privacy considerations, we are unable to share requests without that permission.
2. Please indicate whether or not you would like this request to be shared in worship.
3. You may also indicate that you prefer to keep this request confidential among the PrayerNet Team (currently 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 Mary Jane directly at (304) 712-8700. If you would like to participate in our larger PrayerNet community (as one of the 90+ who have agreed to pray), or volunteer as one of the PrayerNet administrators, contact Lynn at the church office:

[lynn@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org](mailto:lynn@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org).

### **Deacon Shepherd for Animals**

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

## MEET OUR NEWEST DEACONS



### CAROL ARNOLD

Carol grew up in Jesup, GA (a small town in southern GA), but spent most of her adult life in Decatur, GA (a suburb of Atlanta). She graduated with a B.S. in nursing from the Medical College of Georgia in 1978 and worked as a nurse at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta for 37 years before retiring. She is the mother of two sons (Jeremy, who lives in Montana, and Andrew, who lives in Sterling, VA). She has three granddaughters: Maggie and Abby, each age 7, and Julia, age 3. Carol enjoys traveling, cooking, reading, and spending time with her dog, Harper. However, most of all, she loves being a grandmother and spending time with her grandchildren! Becoming a deacon makes her feel an integral part of SPC and she looks forward to serving her flock and has a desire and willingness to help anyone in need.



### TIM ARTLIP

Tim grew up in the suburbs of Potter, NY (population 100), but now lives in the Bakerton-Harpers Ferry metroplex. He earned an A.S. degree from a community college and then went on to earn a B.S. from Cornell University and a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. He has had a 35-year career in plant biology, the last 32 of which have been with the USDA working on fruit trees. He is looking forward to retiring soon. Tim has been married to Moria for almost 30 years and they have one child, Naomi (aka Ny or Ripley). Tim's interests include gardening and coin collecting. He hopes to bring humor, sympathy, and support to his deacon ministry.



### KEITH LOUDERMILL

Keith grew up in Columbia, MD, but now lives in Kearneysville, WV with his husband Tim. He is a retired United States Air Force leader, but now serves as a leadership trainer at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, combining his background in Pastoral Care and Counseling, Human Resource Management and Workforce Education helping people and organizations grow. Keith loves to cook, sing, run, travel and garden. He hopes to bring new perspectives, passion, and love to his deacon ministry.



## CONNIE ROSS

Connie grew up in the coalfields of southern WV in Raleigh County in a close-knit, small community with a lot of family. After earning a BSMT at Concord College in WV, she returned to Raleigh County and lived there for 40 years, mostly in Beckley. She was the Microbiology Supervisor at Raleigh General Hospital for 22 years and worked through the pandemic. She retired after working part-time for about a year. Connie and her husband John have been married for 48 years and have two children: a son, Derek, who lives in Beckley, and a daughter, Kristen, who lives in Hedgesville. She moved to Martinsburg, in August of 2024, near where her daughter and sister were already living, and joined SPC in May 2025. She likes to garden, but states, “Our new home does not have a garden space or many flowers so right now I am enjoying “digging in the dirt!” She hopes to be engaged with and supportive of her new flock.



## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN Donna Dettling, Co-Moderator

**We shifted from last month’s energetic and impassioned Presbyterian Women’s Group meeting to a calmer, more introspective meeting on March 5.** Thirteen of us joined together as Chris Madeo led us into the final section in our book ***See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love*, by Valarie Kaur.** Titled “Breathe and Push – Loving Ourselves,” we reviewed chapter 7 – Breathe. And breathe we did, as we explored some breathing techniques to center ourselves, and watched a video on a Sikh grounding practice. Our conversation revolved around all that women take on, and our need to let go of ego and ask for help when we are overwhelmed. Self-care and self-love are the themes in this section of the book, as we all learn to strengthen ourselves and build resilience to withstand these troubling times. We enjoyed snacks, business conversation, and fellowship, and closed with a Sikh prayer that reminded us of our purpose: “to love and serve one another and create a more peaceful world.”

Throughout the month of March, **our group is collecting donations for Mountain State Justice** to support the vital work they do for our immigrant community. Please give cash or a check made out to Presbyterian Women to Lynne Wiseman or Donna Dettling, or mail a check to Lynne at 517 Morning Calm Lane, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425 before the end of the month.

**Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 5, at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall and on Zoom.** Please read Part 3 - Chapter 8 – “Push” in the book *See No Stranger*. You are welcome to join us and experience what this special group is all about. We look forward to seeing you!

## CONNECTION - LISTENING SESSION UPDATES

*(continued from page 1)*

The sabbatical retreat outcome theme of Connection is being realized through the Listening Session group. The group is using the book ***Heart to Heart* by Robinson and Hawkins** which explores 14 topics including: Gratitude, Balance, God, Loss and Grief, Money, Doubt, and Endings. **A few group members shared the following words about their experience:**

- "I am sincerely grateful for each person participating in our listening sessions. It has become a sacred space for sharing without fear, learning from one another, and practicing listening with true intent."---Jolene Jarrell
- "The time we spend together is so precious to me. It is wonderful to share some of our life journeys. I feel listened to and valued as an individual. " --- Carol Wood
- "The Listening Group enables us to build trust, friendship and communication on an intimate level and becomes a spiritual practice." --- Yvonne Fisher

Special thanks to Keith Loudermill for bringing this spiritual practice to SPC! Several people have indicated interest in joining a second Listening Session group that may start later in the spring or summer. If you'd like to be included, please contact Jen Jones at [jenajones44@gmail.com](mailto:jenajones44@gmail.com)

## FUN - A LUCKY NIGHT OF FUN AND FELLOWSHIP

### ST. PATRICK'S DAY BINGO NIGHT RECAP

Our St. Patrick's Day Bingo Night was a wonderful success and a joy to behold! Thirty people joined us for an evening filled with fun, laughter, and friendly competition. Guests of all ages came together, proving once again that good company and a little bingo excitement are a winning combination. Tasty snacks were generously shared, and gift cards were awarded to the winner of each round—adding an extra dash of excitement.

While some may say the luck of the Irish was with us, **the true good fortune of the night was the sense of friendship and fellowship that filled the room.** Smiles were plentiful, laughter was contagious, and memories were made. And what were those strange animal sounds you may have heard? Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the evening so special. We look forward to many more joyful gatherings together.



# MORE BINGO EXCITEMENT!





## OUR WORK IN THE WORLD

This column in *The Messenger* will contain news and highlights of SPC's outreach to the community and the world: Justice and Peace, EarthCare, Systemic Poverty or Inclusion and Equity.

### WHAT'S NEW AT WORK IN THE WORLD?

**The 2026 Budget was finalized on January 24 including Work in the World's request for \$30,000 for funding SPC outreach. This amount is comparable to 2025 but some of the beneficiaries have changed.**

Beneficiary recipients have received in the first Quarter:

- ✓ \$3,500 to the Bluefields Nicaragua Partnership & VERBO Scholarships
- ✓ \$230 to LGBTQIA Advocacy and Support
- ✓ \$1,000 to WV Rivers and Jefferson County Foundation for Watershed support/advocacy
- ✓ \$750 (half of this year's amount) to Community Markets Inc. during the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle campaign where the CMI donation will be matched

### EARTHCARE



Last month Session approved an EarthCare team proposal to engage a local scout troop led by SPC member Siri McDonald to label the storm drains in the church parking lot. The purpose is to better educate SPC members and visitors about how storm drains in Shepherdstown convey water and pollution into the Town Run and on to the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. The proposed stenciling would appear around the drains and have this wording: **FLOWS TO TOWN RUN AND POTOMAC RIVER**. An April or early May date is planned for the project. Visitors and cheerleaders will be welcome!

### HAVE WE ALL BEEN FED?

**SPC has myriad opportunities to participate in helping many people who are food insecure in Jefferson County. Stay abreast of what you can do by watching this space, the SPC website under Events/Calendar, Sunday bulletins, Facebook and SPC's E-News.**

In the meantime, whether you are an ace scavenger of great things for folks who need them, or a cook waiting to create something yummy, here are the food support activities at SPC:

- ✓ Collection for JCCM - Presbyterian Women spearhead this ongoing collection basket activity for non-perishables, tied in to our communion days, although food can be dropped off any time
- ✓ Collection for Shepherdstown Shares - Presbyterian Women also spearhead this ongoing collection basket activity for non-perishables, tied in to our communion days, although food can be dropped off any time
- ✓ Collection for the Youth away/at school – The Young Adult Ministry keeps SPC connected to those who have graduated from high school and are in college or working; care packages that include snacks and candy are collected and sent periodically
- ✓ Community Meal—Held the first Sunday of each month at Mt. Zion Episcopal Church in Charles Town. Cook or buy food to share and/or be a part of the serving team! If you have more questions, email Connie Ross at [rossjc316@gmail.com](mailto:rossjc316@gmail.com). If you are ready to jump in, go to: <https://www.perfectpotluck.com/meals.php?t=WTED3207&v=cbd4748>

- ✓ Community Cup meals - Presbyterian Women's group provides and serves a meal approximately every two months on a Wednesday evening for 25 - 50 people; anyone can help serve or provide food for the meal
- ✓ Meals for congregants in need – the Deacon's Meals and Rides Ministry provides meals as needed for people dealing with a loss, health issue, or other challenges
- ✓ Community Markets, Inc. – Is a WV non-profit, purchasing food from local farmers and providing affordable, healthy food to the community. SPC supports this organization through donations, but they are always in need of drivers and helpers

## IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SUPPORT

Mountain State Justice (MSJ) is a West Virginia non-profit legal services firm that, since 1996, has been assisting under-served West Virginians with legal help regardless of an individual's ability to pay. MSJ's immigration practice represents individuals in immigration-related cases, including those facing deportation, family-based immigrant visas, asylum, citizenship and naturalization applications, humanitarian-based visas such as U and T visas and petitions under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), removal defense, appeals, advice on the immigration consequences of crimes, and investigations.

MSJ holds regular legal clinics to address concerns about your immigration status or legal options or that of a family member. Questions are addressed confidentially by MSJ immigration attorneys. Call 304-344-3144 or email [IMMIGRATION@MSJLAW.org](mailto:IMMIGRATION@MSJLAW.org) to sign up for a consultation.

MSJ also relies on volunteers to assist with its burgeoning caseload. This is especially true now that the courts have ordered hundreds of detainees in West Virginia to be released.

Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks such as simply helping an immigrant with required paperwork like helping complete a government form or a change of address form. This is not legal work and does not require language skills, though Spanish and other translators are sorely needed. If interested in learning more about how to help support this critical work by MSJ, email [workintheworldspc@gmail.com](mailto:workintheworldspc@gmail.com) and we will connect you. Financial support for Mountain State Justice is always appreciated; SPC supports MSJ financially through Work in the World.

## GUNS TO GARDENS

SPC is sponsoring its third **Guns to Gardens** safe gun-disposal event on Saturday, May 2, 2026, from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. at the Shepherdstown Fire Department, 8052 Martinsburg Pike in Shepherdstown.

Guns to Gardens (G2G) is a nationwide, voluntary program that enables people to safely dispose of unwanted firearms and have them transformed into garden tools or works of art. The project is rooted in Scripture: *"They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks."* Isaiah 2:4.

Since the program's founding in 2012, communities and churches across the country have hosted Guns to Gardens events. SPC has sponsored the program locally since 2022, collecting 71 firearms which were dismantled and repurposed.

Participants often express deep gratitude and relief after taking part, encouraging the church to continue holding these events. At the same time, Guns to Gardens has its critics. Volunteers say they listen carefully and prayerfully to those concerns and have found that many objections stem from misunderstandings about the program and its purpose.

Three common misconceptions arise most often:

**“They’re trying to take away our guns.”**

Guns to Gardens was built on respect for the Second Amendment and the right of individuals to own firearms. At the same time, many people, including people of faith, are deeply concerned about gun violence in the United States. Rather than an anti-gun effort, Guns to Gardens is a community service for gun owners who share that concern and wish to safely repurpose firearms they no longer want or need into tools that cultivate life.

**“They unknowingly destroy guns of historical value.”**

Firearms are part of both national and regional history. At Guns to Gardens events, knowledgeable gun experts are present to alert participants if a firearm may have significant historical or monetary value. This allows owners to make an informed decision about whether to proceed with disposal. If they choose not to, they can be referred to reputable gun dealers in the Eastern Panhandle.

**“No one will turn in guns used in mass shootings, so why bother?”**

Critics often note that firearms used in mass shootings are unlikely to be surrendered at events like this. However, in West Virginia, the greatest risk involving firearms is suicide. In 2023, 77% of gun deaths in the state were suicides, compared with 10% homicides and 3% other causes. For families who have lost loved ones to suicide involving a firearm, the opportunity to remove an unwanted gun from a home can be deeply meaningful.

**How to participate**

Participants should bring unwanted firearms, unloaded and secured in the trunk of their vehicle, to the Shepherdstown Fire Department between 1:00 and 3:30 p.m. on May 2. Donors remain in their vehicles throughout the process.

As an expression of gratitude, participants will receive grocery store gift cards once the dismantling is complete. Gift card amounts correspond to the type of firearm surrendered:

- \$50 for a handgun
- \$100 for a shotgun or rifle
- \$200 for a semi-automatic weapon

For security and privacy reasons, only firearm donors and authorized volunteers will be permitted on the fire department premises during the event.

To help fund this year’s event, Session has approved a Special Offering for G2G on April 15 and 22. We hope to raise \$2,000 to purchase the grocery store gift cards. Given to gun owners as a thank you for each gun they surrender, these gestures of gratitude significantly increase the number of guns brought to these events. Please consider giving what you can. You may donate through the website or in the offering plate in worship on the Special Offering days. Please note “G2G” on your donation. We are so grateful for SPC’s support.

Want to know more? Connect with any of SPC’s G2G steering team members: Leslie Williams, Jeananne Stine, Dave Smith, Terry Tucker, Julie Bakner and Rie Wilson.

## **INCLUSION AND EQUITY**

SPC celebrates Pride month starting June 1 with the **Shepherdstown Pride Parade** that will include SPC as well as many other organizations and festive folks. Then on Sunday, June 14, SPC will celebrate with its own **Pride Service**. If you are interested in joining the SPC marchers for the two-block walk on German St. beginning at 6 p.m., or assisting with planning the SPC service and/or participating in the service, contact Lynn Coddington at [lcoddington51@gmail.com](mailto:lcoddington51@gmail.com). All are Welcome!

**Connect with the Work in the World team: Kay Schlutz, Emily Gross, Anne Teresa, Barbara Hartman, Suellen Myers, Siri McDonald, Pat Hamilton, Lynn Coddington.**



## REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

### Sunday Seminar Series

“Circumstances do not guide my gratitude.” “I learned I am not a victim.” “Instead of asking *why me?* I learned to ask *why not me?*”

This is a sample of what has been shared by SPC members and friends as they spoke of life’s teachings, journeys and spiritual practices. We are mid-point in this inspiring series, which is intended to draw us more into community through sharing our own stories. We’ve learned about some of the things that bring people to SPC, a variety of mindfulness practices and how they strengthen spiritual development, and what it means to work close to life and death in a hospital’s trauma unit.

Our topics for the month of April are:

- April 12 - Long-time Members Looking Back
- April 19 - “Awe”some Experiences
- April 26 - Finding Balance

It is a privilege to share our stories and a gift to receive them. If you are interested in participating on a panel, please contact Anne Teresa at [ateresa@comcast.net](mailto:ateresa@comcast.net)

All are welcome! Join us at 9:30 a.m. Sunday mornings in Fellowship Hall or via Zoom. The Zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3048766466?pwd=cnhPY3kyeG9pbUdGSmZQVVIEM2Jodz09>



## SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 3RD ANNUAL BASEBALL OUTING

Baseball is back! Join your SPC friends and neighbors for our 3rd Annual Baseball Outing at Meritus Park in Hagerstown. We have selected Friday, August 21, at 6:30 p.m. for a game against the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. This is also “Fireworks Friday.” We are planning to purchase group tickets at a cost of \$10 each. More

information and how to reserve your spot will be forthcoming in future newsletters and the Wednesday E-News.

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**Also, visit SPC’s website to get involved**

<https://shepherdstownpresbyterian.org/volunteer/>



## **PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY/ YARNS AND THREADS**

**by Elaine Hurd**

The SPC prayer shawl ministry began in 2002 under the leadership of Vivian Headings and the sponsorship of the Presbyterian Women's group. Vivian taught people to knit, welcomed those who already knew how and formed a knitting group focusing on creating prayer shawls and lap robes as well as baby blankets.

Prayer shawls and lap robes are presented to church members, their family members and close friends who are experiencing difficult times. They are meant to bring comfort and act as reminders to the recipient that they are surrounded by the love of God and the care, concern and support of their church family. Baby blankets are given to newborns, young children or grandchildren. Over the years we have presented 577 prayer shawls, 85 lap robes and 50 baby blankets. Every recipient has expressed their gratitude for this tangible expression of our love and the prayers that go with it.

These are a few examples of the responses we have received:

- "I will always cherish the gift so lovingly stitched and your kindness."
- "Being part of the group, I have seen how much love, care and compassion is knit into every item. Whenever I use my prayer shawl, I feel enfolded by that same love, care and compassion."
- "I received a prayer shawl when my sister passed away, and I really felt comforted that people at church were so supportive. When people are going through hard times or grieving, it means so much. I hope my prayer lap robes have made people feel the comfort that one needs at that time. I pray I can continue to make them."
- "When I spent 20 days in a rehab program at Canterbury Center my prayer shawl went with me. Not only did it keep me warm, but it reminded me that I was surrounded by the prayers of others."

For those of us doing the knitting, it is a gift to know that the time we spend and the prayers we include will be a blessing to someone who needs a word of encouragement or a reminder that they are members of a beloved community.

Several years ago, under Melinda Landolt's leadership, the group renamed itself ***Yarns and Threads*** and welcomed anyone working on any kind of needle work project, for example, embroidery, needlepoint, or sewing projects. Our gatherings have become a time of fellowship, sharing progress on existing projects or the excitement of starting something new. As one participant remarked, this is a time to "Get to know each other better. A great place to laugh and tell stories of our lives."

All are welcome. Contact Susan Lovell or Elaine Hurd for more information, or go to the SPC website homepage for details on our next meeting on March 28!