



THE MESSENGER

May 2026

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church
Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

MAY SABBATICAL NEWS! TIMELINE PROJECT UPDATE



Have you noticed anything new and different in the sanctuary? Our window displays representing the eras of SPC have begun to be installed and will be completed in early May. We hope you are taking a few minutes to look at the unique creations and letting your memory be jogged by the event lists. Many thanks to those who put in the work to get these done!

The Quote Vote has been tallied! Watch for the unveiling of the balcony quote that you all chose to represent the life and meaning of SPC.

Next, ribbons will be installed to tie the window displays together and link the full timeline around three sides of the sanctuary! **Later in May**, we will distribute tags to everyone where you can write your special remembrances. Start thinking of meaningful things you would like to highlight on the timeline!

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for a Congregational Timeline Celebration on June 7 at noon in the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary! We will share snacks, listen to each other's stories, tie our tags onto the timeline, celebrate SPC's rich history, and look to the future! When Pastor Gusti returns, we will share the timeline with her and invite her to add her own tags.

We hope you are energized by the creation of the SPC Timeline, and looking forward to personalizing it!

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

100 W. Washington Street

P.O. Box 268

Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

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

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

WORSHIP AT SPC

May 2026

Easter is not just a day, but a season in the life of the church. That season began on Easter Sunday, April 5, and continues through May 17. Worship will follow the Revised Common Lectionary, focusing on the presence of the living Christ in our own time and place. Then on May 24 we will observe Pentecost Sunday, the birthday of the church, followed by Trinity Sunday (May 31).

Sunday, May 3 **The Way, the Truth, and the Life** John 14:1-14
Fifth Sunday of Easter
Memorial Moment
Communion

Sunday, May 10 **Youth/Graduation Sunday** Jeremiah 1:4-9
Graduates Jillian Dillow and Mason Brown will share reflections
SPC Youth will lead the service

Sunday, May 17 **On Christian Unity** John 17:1-11
Seventh Sunday of Easter

Sunday, May 24 **Being Church** Acts 2:1-21
Pentecost

Sunday, May 31 **Say We** Matthew 28:16-20
Trinity Sunday
Rev. Harry Daniel preaching
(Pastor Mary Jane on vacation)



CHILDREN AND YOUTH UPDATE

Christa Mastrangelo Joyce
Director of Children and Youth Formation

As of Tuesday, April 21, I have completed my coursework requirements for the Christian Educator certification and am now preparing to begin the final big project requirements to achieve the official certification.

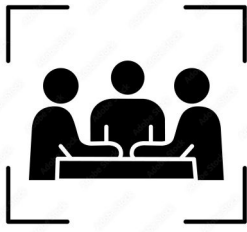
The final course, called *Worship and Sacraments*, was as rich and packed with wisdom as the rest. I was reminded, in the words of theologian Hughes Oliphant Old, that “we worship God because God created us to worship [God]. Worship is at the center of our existence, at the heart of our reason for being. God created us to be [God’s] image—an image that would reflect [God’s] glory. In fact the whole of creation was brought into existence to reflect the divine glory.” In this, I am reminded that worship is not something I need to come up with my own reasons for doing; instead, I might instead walk my own “Emmaeus Road” with each of you.

We could begin with the message of Easter—Christ is risen! Yet, this can seem like a small, green, growing plant set out into the garden too soon. All seems well until life serves up disappointment or loss like a killing frost after weeks of warm weather; then how quickly our belief can wither. **What we need is to encounter our living Lord and be transformed by what we have tasted and seen.**

Much like the couple that walks the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, when the risen Jesus joins them on the way. They do not recognize him, but their hearts begin to burn as Jesus interprets all the things about himself found in Scripture. I imagine this was the greatest sermon ever given, yet it is only later at the table that their eyes are opened to the presence of Christ when Jesus “took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.”

This is the story of the unfolding layout of worship—in which we are gathered by ritual that gains meaning through relationship, where the word is interpreted, the table of thanksgiving comes alive, and the real worship begins as all who’ve been touched by the Spirit move back into the world. This is a model to us to ignite our own hearts and remind us of the grace of our Baptism, with the word and sacrament.

The sacramental life of the church regularly reminds me to bring my flesh to the house of God, to join the gathering of those who worship, trusting that God will meet us there—perhaps in some thought or feeling but certainly in the bread and juice. And so I will continue showing up each Sunday in that house where I can rest and receive.



APRIL SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Suellen Myers, Clerk of Session

Session met on 9 April at 7:00 pm. A quorum was declared, and Pastor Mary Jane moderated the meeting.

Finance/Treasurer – Current financial reports were provided. The church's finances are in good order. Patti McCarthy, Pete Spreen and a third person will conduct the annual financial audit.

Property – The committee presented three requests for approval: 1) Voda Cleaning to clean carpets, pew cushions and the basement, 2) Holler Boy to repair the front steps and porch area, and 3) modifications to the office area. All were **Approved**.

Proposed Session Statement – Completed surveys have been received from most session members. Pastor Mary Jane will create a basic outline as a starting point for Lynn Coddington and Julie Slonaker to produce a draft statement.

Moderator – Services during Lent and on Easter were joyful and well attended. There were 146 at the Easter service. May 10 is graduation/Youth Sunday. Jillian Dillow and Mason Brown will provide reflections. Harry Daniel will preach on May 31 (Trinity Sunday). June 28 will be Pastor Mary Jane's last Sunday with us.

Pastor Mary Jane continues to be impressed by the deacons and their work. She is giving the training necessary to allow deacons to take communion to any who wish it and are unable to attend a service.

Deacons – Continue training. A seminar on Autism Acceptance will be held on April 26 after the 11:00 service.

Work in the World – The stenciling project will occur on May 13. Pat Hamilton and Lynn Coddington attended the April meeting of Presbyterian Women. They gave an overview of what the team is and what it is doing, specifically on behalf of the immigrant community and their support for Mountain State Justice.

Clerk's Report – Communion was served March 15 and 22, and April 2 and 5 and will be served on May 3 as previously approved. The March minutes were approved as amended. The 2025 minutes of Session were reviewed and approved by Presbytery. The next stated meeting will be May 14, 2026.

Pastor Mary Jane Hitt closed the meeting with prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

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

BUILDING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

The Finance Committee met to review March's financial reports, discuss stewardship and budget processes, and review upcoming projects.

The committee found that revenue and expenses are in line with expectations, but noted that while pledge income was meeting targets, general giving had decreased compared to the previous year.

The committee continued to work on updating the stewardship and budget timelines and documentation, clarifying roles and responsibilities for pledge reporting and campaign communications. The committee agreed to examine the long-pending chancel light project and prepare for the upcoming annual financial audit.

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 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 MARCH 31, 2026

| Income and Expenses | 2026 Budget (12 Months) | Actuals* through March 31 | Actuals as % of the 12-Month Budget |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Operating Income | \$358,589 | \$119,826 | 33% |
| Operating Expenses | \$397,841 | \$100,306 | 25% |

* Actuals include major gifts

DEACON

DEACON TEAM UPDATE

Donna Dettling, Deacon Moderator

The deacon team is very pleased that Session approved our request to provide **Extended Home Communion to those who are not able to attend church in person**. Extended communion allows for two trained deacons and/or elders to take communion as soon as possible after communion is served during worship, without the pastor being present. A specific order of worship is followed, which includes: Extending the Lord's Table, Confession, Assurance of Forgiveness, Scripture and Interpretation, Communion, Prayer of Thanksgiving and Blessing. Pastor Mary Jane is training the deacons at the April and May deacon meetings. We believe this is a much-needed extension of our deacon service, and look forward with gratitude to being able to perform extended home communion.



One of our greatest joys as deacons is visiting in-person with our flock members and other members of the church. Deacon Sherry Sykes and her husband, Bob, were able to have such a visit with John and Helen Burns and Bill and Beth Rule in early April at their community. Sherry reports that they were all in great spirits and happy to spend time with them. Please see the smiling faces of our beloved friends who are so very much missed at SPC! If you are friends with any of our members who are no longer attending regularly, please consider visiting them! It's so meaningful to everyone that

we stay connected.

An Autism Acceptance Workshop was hosted by the Workshops and Educational Events Ministry of the deacons in late April. A group of panelists presented segments on understanding, accepting, and accommodating the neurodiverse, followed by a period of Q and A. We hope that you will consider ways SPC might be more welcoming to those of all abilities.

It means a lot to each deacon to know that you receive our communications, whether or not you choose to be in close contact. We are here for you, and we hope you may find care and belonging at SPC through the deacon ministry and our greater faith community.

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) 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.)
4. To maintain confidentiality and reduce email volume, **we respectfully ask that you do not reply to PrayerNet requests.**

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.

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.

On Friday, April 10, a “Sing-a-long for the Animals” was held in Fellowship Hall. Music was provided by Terry Tucker and a choir of voices and laughter echoed throughout the room. Mary Ellen Lloyd made sure the group was well fed with pizza, salad, cookies, and beverages. Donation baskets were generously filled with cleaning supplies, cat and dog food. A smaller container held a monetary contribution of \$377.00! The donations were delivered to the Animal Welfare Society of Jefferson County. The staff was so grateful and wanted me to pass on their many thanks. Working with the shelter for years, you made me proud!! Deacon for the Animals, Carol Wood



REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

Sunday Seminar Series

The winter/spring Sunday Seminar series on “Remember Who You Are” is coming to a close. We have heard panelists discussing various topics during this time in an effort to get to know one another better. Don't miss the last two sessions in May:

- May 3 - Transformative Books
- May 10 - Reflections on our Mothers

It is a privilege to share our stories and a gift to receive them. All are welcome! Join us at 9:30 a.m. Sunday mornings in Fellowship Hall or via Zoom. The Zoom link is:

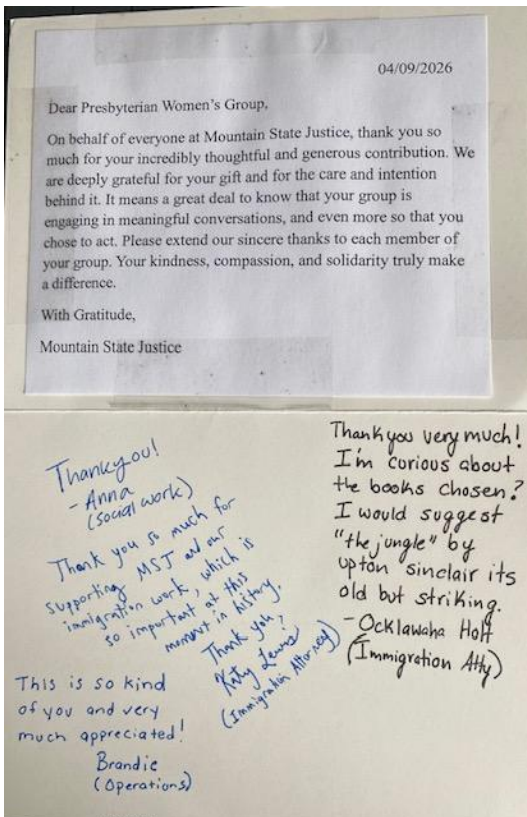
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3048766466?pwd=cnhPY3kyeG9pbUdGSmZQVVIEM2Jodz09>



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Donna Dettling, Co-Moderator

We had 13 women present at our Presbyterian Women's Group in April and enjoyed the winding down of our book *See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love*, by Valarie Kaur. Mica Martin led us through chapter 8 – 'Push,' which instructed us to take care of our own needs before the needs of others. We did a 'Mother Tree' meditation to center ourselves, and discussed how all of life is connected. There was dialog about how trauma lives in our bodies in different places, and that anger is a natural response to grief. Reconciliation requires an understanding between parties as they ask for forgiveness. As always, we enjoyed snacks, business conversation, and fellowship. Rie Wilson closed the meeting with a beautiful and meaningful prayer after we went around in our prayer request circle.



During the month of March, our group collected **\$400 in donations for Mountain State Justice** to support the vital work they do for our immigrant community. We received a heartfelt thank you note following the receipt of our check. Pat Hamilton and Lynn Coddington talked to us about **additional volunteer opportunities through Mountain State Justice**, to help recently released detainees with paperwork, transportation, phone calls, and other simple needs. We hope that some of the PW group members will be interested in volunteering.

Our next regular meeting will be on Thursday, May 7, at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall and on Zoom. Please read Part 3 - Chapter 9 – 'Transition' and the Epilogue in the book *See No Stranger*. **Our final gathering for the year will be a potluck picnic at the home of Chris Madeo on Thursday, June 4, at 11:30 a.m.** You are welcome to join us and experience what this special group is all about. We look forward to seeing you!



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 Work in the World team is continuing to disburse funds to the organizations and programs we identified for support in this first year of our new collaborative model. The \$30,000 approved by Session is comparable to 2025 but some of the beneficiaries have changed.

We want to select specific programs in each organization that align more closely with our focus areas of Justice and Peace, Inclusion and Equity, Systemic Poverty and Earth Care where we believe we can have a more tangible impact.

Recipients in the Second Quarter:

- \$3,000 to the Presbyterian Home of the Highlands, Wytheville, VA
- \$500 to Annunciation House in El Paso, TX for migrant care
- \$250 to support the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, a national LGBTQIA support group of churches

Recipients in the First Quarter:

- \$3,500 to the Bluefields Nicaragua Partnership & VERBO Scholarships support and advocacy in WV
- \$750 to Community Markets Inc. during the United Way campaign so that the CMI donation will be matched by the "Unity" campaign

Special Offering:

Guns to Gardens is included as one of our Justice and Peace programs through Work in the World. During April, special offerings for the G2G team were conducted during SPC services to raise funds for the purchase of gift cards; gift cards are an integral part of the 'thank you' offered to those who surrender their weapons during the G2G event.

EARTHCARE

We celebrate Earth Day this year with our 15th Certification as an EarthCare congregation. Responding to the General Assembly's "**CALL TO RESTORE THE CREATION**," a resolution in 2010 resulted in a simple, four-part pledge. Churches applying to be an Earth Care Congregation sign the Earth Care Pledge affirmed by their session and signed by the clerk. To become **re-certified**, a church tracks its continued commitments; progress in each of the areas are marked since the time of the last certification. To maintain certification, applications are submitted annually by February for review. SPC has just received its 15+ years of certification.

Short video about the ECC program <https://vimeo.com/1056449517?share=copy#t=0>.

Over 350 churches across the USA are currently certified as Earth Care Congregations. Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church is one of just 3 churches in the state of West Virginia currently certified. You can see a map of all the 2026 Earth Care Congregations here: <https://tinyurl.com/pcusaeccmap>.



HAVE WE ALL BEEN FED?

Hungry neighbors are likely to be a constant in our world for some time so we will republish all the ways you can help feed those in need. Read *The Messenger*, watch SPC’s Facebook page, SPC’s website, E-News and special announcements in church or online. One small sandwich can mean something big.

Create! Grow! Buy Local! Forage! Cook!

- ✓ Food 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 (in the sanctuary or outside the office).
- ✓ Food 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 (in the sanctuary or outside the office).
- ✓ Food and supplies collection for the Youth away/at school - Part of the deacon's Young Adult Ministry to stay connected with 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 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 crossjc316@gmail.com. If you are ready to jump in, go to: <https://www.perfectpotluck.com/meals.php?t=WTED3207&v=cbd4748866>
- ✓ Community Cup meals - Presbyterian Women provide and serve 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 CMI through donations, but they are always in need of drivers and helpers.
- ✓ Plant an extra row in your garden. JCCM and Shepherdstown Shares can always use food donations as well as neighbors in our congregation and beyond. Let someone on the Work in the World team know you have fresh food to share. workintheworldspc@gmail.com

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SUPPORT

Mountain State Justice (MSJ) is a West Virginia non-profit legal services firm that assists under-served West Virginians with legal help regardless of an individual's ability to pay. 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 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. If interested in learning more about how to help support this critical work by MSJ, email workintheworldspc@gmail.com

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 our 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., contact Lynn Coddington at lcoddington51@gmail.com. All are Welcome!

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

Also, visit SPC's website to get involved
<https://shepherdstownpresbyterian.org/volunteer/>



RESERVE YOUR SPOT 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 on Friday, August 21, at 6:30 p.m. for a game against the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. This is also “Fireworks Friday.” Tickets are \$10 each. If you are parents of youth, please reserve your spot with Christa Joyce in person

or contacting her at christa@shepherdstownpresbyterian.org. All others should contact Joyce Neumark in person or at neumark@myactv.net. Money is not due at this time, but we want to get an idea of how many tickets are needed. We currently have reserved 50 seats. Deadline for reservations is June 1.



GRADUATE REQUEST

Do you have a graduate in your family this year? If so, we would like to recognize graduates from high school, college, or post-college in the June newsletter. They don't have to be a member of SPC; if you have a grandchild who is graduating, even if they live in another state, we would like to honor them (and you) as well. We would like to know from where they are graduating, any activities they were in, and what their future holds. For high school graduates, we would like to know what their plans are—working, military, college, etc. If going to college, please tell us where they will be going. For college graduates, we would like to know what degree they earned and what they are planning in the future. Information (and a picture if possible) should be submitted to Joyce Neumark at neumark@myactv.net by May 16.

CONGRATULATIONS KERI MAHONEY



Keri was chosen Jefferson County Schools **Administrator of the Year** for the second year in a row. Here is what her school said about her: “We would like to congratulate our **AMAZING** principal for being named Jefferson County Schools 2025-2026 Administrator of the Year. She is the best and very deserving of this achievement. We are very fortunate to have her at SJES! Congratulations, Ms. Mahoney.” The congregation at SPC extends its congratulations as well!

HAPPY 5TH ANNIVERSARY LYNN DAMPMAN



Lynn joined the staff of SPC as our Administrative Assistant in 2021. May 17 will be officially Lynn Dampman Day!

Here’s what people are saying...

- ❖ For the past five years, Lynn has faithfully served our church as secretary, and her impact reaches far beyond her job title. She has a huge heart and is always quick to assist anyone in need, offering kindness, patience, and genuine care in every interaction. Lynn views her role not simply as a position, but as a ministry—a mission that supports and strengthens the life of our church. She is deeply dedicated to SPC and to our congregation, taking great pride and responsibility in the work she does and the difference it makes. We are truly blessed by her commitment, compassion, and unwavering service. – KM
- ❖ Celebrating 5 years of Lynn: Willingest heart, hunger to learn, commitment to SPC, flexibility, competence, trustworthiness, and grace. – LW
- ❖ Lynn is LOL!
 - **Laughing.** She laughs a lot with her great sense of humor, including at herself.
 - **Ornery.** She has that twinkle in her eyes when she’s about to say something ornery.
 - **Lovable.** She is kind, thoughtful, and caring.
 - And I’ll throw in how conscientious she is and easy to work with. – RW
- ❖ Equanimity. Seriously, Lynn calmly manages so much more than meets the eye. – PH
- ❖ Lynn is the centerpiece of what makes SPC hum. Without her care and commitment, all of us who rely on her would be a lot less successful. Thank you, Lynn, for your five years of dedication. - LC

Let’s celebrate Lynn all month long!

OCCASIONAL REMEMBRANCES



SHADOW

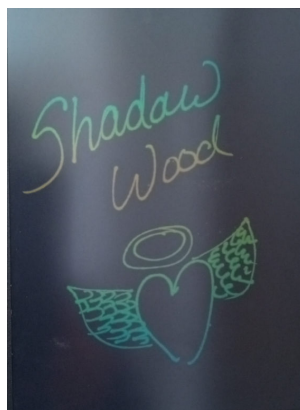
By Carol Wood, Deacon for the Animals

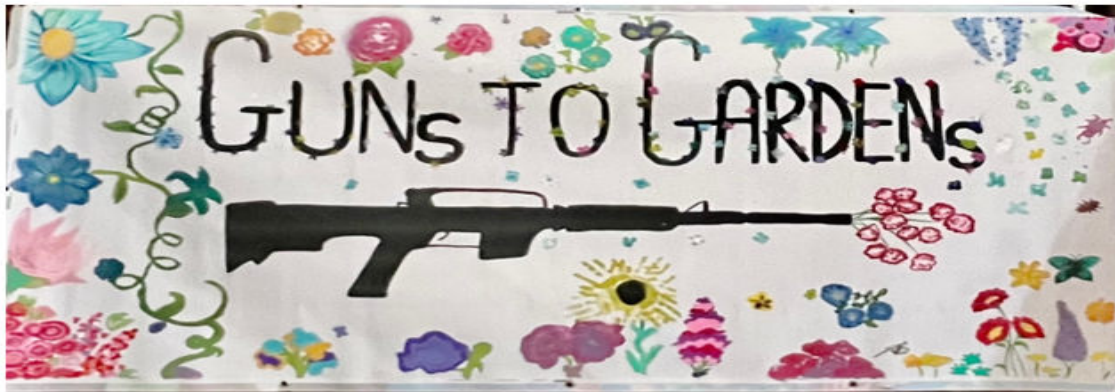
Mother was visiting me that May spring afternoon, when Shadow first showed herself to me. We were sitting together on my porch, enjoying the beautiful day, when around the corner, a little black kitten wandered over to us, behaving as if she was in familiar territory and greeting us with meows and purrs. I had no idea where she came from! Native Americans believed animals choose us, not the other way around. I must say that was the case here. It wasn't difficult coming up with her name. With her shiny black coat and a little white star of fur under her chin, the name Shadow fit perfectly.

We bonded right away. In the morning, while having my first cup of coffee, Shadow would curl up on my lap. When outside working in my garden or reading in the sun, she would find a shady spot close by and lie down for a nap. Wherever I might be in the house, you can bet she would be found nearby. Shadow brought such joy, laughter and play into my life.

Days and years passed by, and like humans, our companion animals grow old as well. Eighteen years ago, Shadow chose me and my life has been blessed with cuddles, purrs, meows and quiet moments of us just being together. Then the day arrived when I had to return Shadow to her Maker. I took the most selfless, painful step and let go of my dear companion, releasing her from her aged and tired body. I was broken, overwhelmed with a deep grief. I dreaded returning home without her, knowing the spaces she had once occupied would echo with a void that would haunt me and return me again to a deep sorrow.

My peace comes from Shadow being held in a warm embrace, resting in my Mother's arms. Someday, when my turn comes to leave this earth, I believe both of them will be there to welcome me home.





Have any guns you'd like out of your house and off the streets?

Bring them to SPC's next Guns to Gardens event tomorrow, May 2,
from 1 – 3:30 p.m. at the Shepherdstown Fire Department

They'll be dismantled on site and turned into beautiful,
life-giving garden tools.

**Let's Double The SPC Marchers This Year! Join Us June 1, 6 p.m.,
For A Short Walk To Support The LGBTQIA Community**

