



# THE MESSENGER

June 2026

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church  
Shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

## PASTOR'S NOTE

As the time comes for Pastor Gusti's Sabbatical leave to end and for me to conclude my ministry at SPC, I want to share some insights from our time together these past months.

Before assuming the role of Guest Pastor here, I already knew what a special place this church is. Now I understand that more fully, as I have seen you live out your core values from day to day. Radical Hospitality, Holistic Spirituality, and Engaged Compassion are more than just words on a page. They drive what you do and how you do it, from worship, to caring for one another, to your work in the world.

(As a side note, I have learned since being here that these core values were developed via a process led by Holy Cow – a company that was begun by and is led by one of my friends and neighbors in Westerville, Ohio – Emily Swanson. She lives a block away from Bill and me!)

Your support for my ministry at SPC has taken many forms: The office staff have gently guided me in the administrative rhythms of the church. They are the glue that holds the church together. Christa Mastrangelo Joyce has been a valued partner in ministry, bringing her heart and wisdom to our mutual work. You are blessed to have her as part of the ministry team. Members of Session have individually and collectively guided the church, and me, leaning into the leadership roles to which they have been ordained. Deacons have provided care to members in ways large and small, taking special care to maintain the church's connection with those in need or who can no longer attend services in person. And volunteers have stepped up in innumerable ways to continue the work of this congregation, simply doing what needs to be done with open hands and loving hearts.

Together we have learned the importance of grounding what we do in scripture; of teaching our children well; of encouraging both education and fellowship; and of listening deeply to all participants in this congregation. We have taken risks on behalf of the Gospel, trusting that the power of love is greater than the power of hate. As you engage with Pastor Gusti around what both she and you have experienced and learned during this Sabbatical time, I trust that you will be grounded in the Risen Christ and bound together in the Spirit of Love.

I look forward to being with you in the future, when Bill and I visit the Shepherdstown Hitts. Until then, peace be with you . . .

Blessings,

*Pastor Mary Jane*

**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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[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)

# SPC SESSION STATEMENT

Recognizing that we are living in an unprecedented time in our country and world, the Session of SPC has been considering what it means for us to walk in the way and in the spirit of Jesus in this time and place. Since January, we have been exploring how our core values of Radical Hospitality, Holistic Spirituality, and Engaged Compassion guide us not only today but into the future. We engaged in conversation regarding the meaning of each value, how we act on it, how the value is currently threatened, and how SPC might more boldly embody our values. Then, at its May meeting, Session voted unanimously to affirm the Session Statement which follows.

We invite you to read this statement and reflect on it, as together we live into our calling to be a faith community committed to love, justice, and peace.

The Session of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church

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**In this time of national and international division**, distrust, and despair, the Session of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church reaffirms the core values – Radical Hospitality, Holistic Spirituality and Engaged Compassion -- that drive this congregation as we walk in the Way and in the Spirit of Jesus. As the world around us changes and looks less like the beloved community, we affirm that our values, grounded in our faith, will not change. To paraphrase Martin Luther, “Here we stand. We can do no other.”

## **RADICAL HOSPITALITY: “We Choose Welcome”**

*John 6:37. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away.*

We believe that everyone and everything, and every part of ourselves, are included in the circle of God’s love. We believe that imperfection and suffering are integral to the spiritual path. We try, we fall short, we gain wisdom, and try again. Because of these beliefs, we welcome everyone to participate fully in the life of our congregation. We embrace one another in good times and in bad – in the joys of life as well as when we encounter life’s challenges.

This value is under attack in our current national environment, where hate speech, fear tactics, and violence are being used daily to divide people and communities. False narratives paint the “other” as the enemy, eroding trust among neighbors. Attacks on vulnerable groups create a climate of fear for all.

As people who walk in the Way and in the Spirit of Jesus, we at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church affirm that we continue to welcome all people into the life and work of this congregation. We stand and we sing in protest against inequity and injustice, we march in solidarity with those at the margins who are rendered voiceless, and we use the power of the ballot to help guarantee the well-being of all people. No matter who you are, no matter where you have been, you are welcome here. We seek partnerships with others who enable us to maximize our resources and impact.

### **HOLISTIC SPIRITUALITY: “Everything Belongs”**

*Micah 6:8. He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?*

We believe that the Way of Jesus is a path of transformation, and that doubt and questions are essential to faith. We are on a journey of discovery. We embrace multiple wisdom traditions and sources, believing that the truths of many other faith traditions give further depth and meaning to our own.

This value is under attack in our current national environment, where Christian Nationalism promotes a narrow view of the Christian faith, demonizing Christian and other traditions where the understanding of faith differs from theirs.

As people who walk in the Way and in the Spirit of Jesus, we at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church are committed to engaging with those of other faith traditions that share our core values. We invite conversation and collaboration with Interfaith partners who, joining with us, may speak as one, united in love to do justice for all.

### **ENGAGED COMPASSION: “God is Love”**

*1 John 4:16. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.*

We believe that 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 in demonstrable ways. We believe that we each play a part in restoring God’s good creation through loving action. We take care of the planet God has designed, we speak up for others, and we care for those who are most vulnerable. This value is under attack in our current national environment, where social safety nets are being weakened as funding is removed from programs that support the poor and marginalized, where protections for the earth are steadily stripped away. Rather than addressing the systemic social and economic challenges of our time, those in authority too often blame vulnerable individuals and groups, further dividing us from one another.

As people who walk in the Way and in the Spirit of Jesus, we at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church are committed to being at work in the world. Acting humbly but without hesitation, we advocate for clean water and wise land use. We serve food to those who often go without, offer shelter to the unhoused, and provide a safe place or a compassionate word if that is all that is required. We turn swords into plowshares. We invite alliances with others who share our values in order to maximize the support we will provide.

**This we declare to the world we live in.**

Session, Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church  
May 14, 2026

## **The Session of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church**

**Suellen Myers – Clerk  
Lynn Coddington  
John Gonano  
Mary Anne Hitt  
Keri Mahoney  
Julie Slonaker  
Wanda Stewart  
Anne Teresa  
Adam Ware  
Carolee Youngblood**

# WORSHIP AT SPC

June 2026

It's hard to believe, but this time of Sabbatical rest and reflection for Pastor Gusti and for SPC is coming to an end. Pastor Gusti returns from her Sabbatical leave on June 15. Pastor Mary Jane will preside and preach at worship the first two Sundays of June, and then on June 21, Pastor Gusti will preach. On June 28, Pastor Mary Jane's final service with us, Pastor Gusti will both lead the service and preach.

**Sunday, June 7**

*10<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Memorial Moment

Communion

**“Live Into Hope”**

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

**Sunday, June 14**

Pride Sunday

**“Fearfully and Wonderfully Made”**

Psalms 139:1-18

**Sunday, June 21**

*12<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Pastor Gusti preaching

Pastor Mary Jane presiding

**“A Sabbath Blessing”**

Matthew 5:1-2, 11-12

**Sunday, June 28**

*13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Pastor Gusti preaching and presiding

**“A Song of Love”**

Psalms 89:1-4



## **CHILDREN AND YOUTH UPDATE**

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

SPC's message of love came through loud and clear on Graduate Recognition Sunday, May 10. This special service, presided over by the youth members and me, with reflections offered by two of our graduates, Mason Brown and Jillian Dillow, reminded me, and I daresay many other congregants, of how essential the love of this congregation is.

In preparation for this service, the youth and I discussed the importance of worship as I uncovered for them some of the particularities of the Order of Worship. Each member then engaged in preparing the liturgy for the day.

While some leaned into music for the day, others wrote prayers and chose scripture. Sophia Tuzzio wrote a paraphrase of Psalm 139 to serve as our reading for the day. Mileur and Evelyn Bailey wrote the Prayer for Wholeness. Hazel Hitt created a delightful First Pew offering for the children of the church. Michael Joyce, Jillian Dillow, Mason Brown, William Gibbs, Joel Dillow, William Gonano, and Liam Wohleber chose scripture and music. Each and all expressed their leadership, curiosity, and devotion to the church through both their participation in planning and then leading worship on this special day.

Mason Brown expressed deep appreciation toward his SPC teachers, mentors, and fellow adult and youth members who've guided him in love. He stood before us embodying the message he knows is the heart of SPC: "God is love, and those who abide in love, abide in God." Truly, that love is all we need.

Jillian Dillow spoke of the ways they feel uncertain to go out into the world; after all, like the prophet Jeremiah, whose scripture passage helped inform liturgy for the day, they are only a "boy." Yet, they are also equipped with a voice that is sure and confident, through a great and powerful anchor of love. Jillian looked into the pews of congregants and assured us of this: "You have succeeded in loving me well." What more could we hope for than this?

To each of these, I can imagine God saying, "well done, good and faithful one." Perhaps, then, like the prophet Jeremiah, and like our youth, we can rest knowing that "before we were formed in our mother's womb" we were loved, known, and called, with the precious words of God, words of love, put in our mouths.



## MAY SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

### Suellen Myers, Clerk of Session

Session met on May 14 at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was declared, and the meeting was moderated by Pastor Mary Jane.

**Budget/Finance** – It was reported that pledged giving is on track, though general is down somewhat. This may be due to more people pledging and is not unexpected. The annual audit was conducted by Patti McCarthy, Lynn Coddington, Pete Spreen, and Adam Ware. There were no negative findings. A copy of the report is kept in the financial archive box for fiscal year 2025 and is available for review at any time. Adam Ware has agreed to be in charge of stewardship.

**Deacons** – The Autism Acceptance Workshop was very successful. As a result, Deacons requested endorsement of their plan to make SPC more welcoming and accommodating to the neurodiverse. They want to provide a cart in the entrance to the sanctuary with items that can be borrowed for the service, such as noise cancelling headphones, sensory and fidget objects, etc., and a quiet corner in the Fellowship Hall. On a motion by Anne Teresa, seconded by Wanda Stewart, the request was **Endorsed**.

**Proposed Session Statement** – A final draft was sent to Session prior to the meeting for review. It is based on the values of SPC. A first draft had previously been reviewed via email. After a lengthy time for questions, suggestions, discussion, and prayerful discernment, Session unanimously endorsed the final draft as written. The Statement, with cover letter, is printed elsewhere in the Messenger.

**Appointment to Reference Group** - Christa has made formal application to become a Certified Christian Educator. She has completed all her course work. Keri Mahoney was appointed to be Christa's link to Session and Pastor Mary Jane will be her connection to Staff. The motion to approve both appointments was made by Mary Anne Hitt with a second by Lynn Coddington. Approved. They will support our own Christa Mastrangelo Joyce through the whole process.

**Sabbatical Team** - On June 7 the congregation will be able to hang their tags on the timeline. It will be a celebration and will allow Pastor Gusti to fit her tags into the timeline when she gets back. The congregation will have an opportunity to consider and talk about their own experiences during Sabbatical. On June 28 there will be a reception to honor and show our appreciation for Pastor Mary Jane and to welcome Pastor Gusti home.

**Personnel** – Adjustments to the placement of Lynn Dampman and Christa Mastrangelo Joyce's work locations, as approved by Session, will begin after the downstairs carpets are cleaned. Rie Wilson has volunteered to schedule summer music, as the choir and Sheila Melendez will be off. Keri Mahoney will be meeting with Pastor Mary Jane to review her time with SPC. Christa Mastrangelo Joyce is beginning her final project as part of the Certified Christian Educator certification. Lynn Dampman will be recognized at the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday, May 17, in thanks for her five years of service to SPC.

**Property** – Carpet and upholstery cleaning has been completed, as has the front steps/masonry project. The office update project is on hold while the team investigates soundproofing solutions.

**Moderator - Pastor** Gusti will be preaching on June 21 with Pastor Mary Jane in charge of the service. On June 28 Pastor Gusti will run the service and Pastor Mary Jane will be in the congregation. She thought Graduation Sunday was wonderful with the Youth being in charge of the whole service.

The last meeting of the Support Team will be Tuesday, May 19. Mary Jane is hoping that SPC creates a Worship Team/Committee.

Deacons are doing really good work. The training for administering Communion has been completed. This will improve pastoral care and outreach.

Pastor Mary Jane reported that she and Bill will be on vacation from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> of June. They will be attending the graduation of their grandson.

**Clerk** – Communion was served May 3 and will be served June 7 as previously approved.

The death of John Mason on May 4 was read into the minutes. The minutes of the April regular meeting as well as the minutes of the Called meeting (April 27) were approved as amended/corrected. The next regular meeting will be June 11.

Pastor Mary Jane closed the meeting with prayer and we adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

*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 TIMELINE PROJECT UPDATE



**Did you pick up your timeline memory tags and your leaves for future hopes? If not, they are available at both entrances into the sanctuary.** We invite you to honor and celebrate your special events or fondest memories of SPC by creating a tag indicating your name, the memory, and its date on one side, and a photo or other memorabilia on the other side (if you'd like). You might also do a memorial tag to honor a loved one, a remembrance of a time in history that is particularly meaningful to you, or anything else you'd like to become part of our living memorial.

On the leaves, we ask you to consider your hopes and dreams for the future of SPC, the country, or the world and write those out on leaves to be hung on the 'future tree' in the window closest to the Fellowship Hall.

**We will have a Congregational Timeline Celebration on June 7 at noon in the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary!** We will listen to each other's memories, tie our tags onto the timeline and our leaves on the tree, 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 meaningful tags. **Please bring snacks to share at our gathering!** You can also create tags while you are there.

***We hope you are enjoying the transformation in the sanctuary, and looking forward to personalizing it on June 7!***



# SPC'S FINANCIAL HEALTH REPORT

Dave Smith, Budget and Finance

## BUILDING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

The Finance Committee met to review April's financial reports, discuss stewardship and budget processes, as well as 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 annual audit was recently completed, and a report is being written for presentation to the Session.

The committee appointed Adam Ware as this year's stewardship chair; John Gonano, past chair, will advise and support Adam. Stewardship is a year-round commitment to the church's mission. However, the work of building the stewardship campaign to raise the funds necessary to financially support the church begins in May with the appointment of the stewardship chair. The stewardship team – Adam, with support from John, Lynn Dampman, the Communications Team and B&F committee – will work through the summer to identify fundraising goals and design the pledge materials to invite members to give in support of the church's mission and activities.

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 APRIL 30, 2026

<b>Income and Expenses</b>	<b>2026 Budget (12 Months)</b>	<b>Actuals* through April 30</b>	<b>Actuals as % of the 12-Month Budget</b>
<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>\$358,589</b>	<b>\$139,377</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$397,841</b>	<b>\$131,454</b>	<b>33%</b>

\* Actuals include major gifts



# DEACON

## DEACON TEAM UPDATE

Donna Dettling, Deacon Moderator

**The deacons are now trained to do the service of Extended Home Communion for those who are homebound or unable to attend services.** This is an extension of the communion that is served during worship, and therefore must be done as soon after a communion Sunday as possible. Two deacons would take the elements and perform the communion service. If home communion is requested at a different time, it would be performed by the pastor and a deacon. We are prepared to begin offering this special service as of June 7, so please contact your deacon or the church office to make a request.

**Our Autism Acceptance Workshop was well attended (31 participants) and very informative.** Five panelists shared their personal knowledge and experience of different aspects of neurodiversity with us, and the attendees asked questions and received material to take home. We also did an interactive activity where we broke into small groups to discuss ways SPC might be more welcoming and accommodating of the neurodiverse, and then brought those ideas to the larger group. **Using those suggestions, the deacons got session's approval to move forward with the following first steps:**

- Purchase a multi-drawer rolling cart for the entrance to the sanctuary which will hold:
  - Noise-cancelling headphones
  - Sensory and fidget objects
  - Wristbands or tags indicating preferred level of contact (i.e. fist bump, hug, none)
  - Sign indicating these items can be borrowed during the service or event and promoting the couch area in the Fellowship Hall as a Quiet Corner for those needing a moment away from the sanctuary
  - Sanitary wipes to clean objects that have been used

We believe these are simple but thoughtful steps toward making the worship experience better for all, and may lead to additional training and accommodating efforts. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions as we strive to live into SPC's philosophy of welcoming all.

### 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, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.) 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).



## **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

**Donna Dettling, Co-Moderator**

**We completed our book *See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love*, by Valarie Kaur** at our May meeting, which was the last regular meeting of this PW year. Anne Teresa led us through the final chapter, 'Transition,' which talked about releasing our inner critic and putting the emphasis on joy, which is the gift of love. The author feels that love is the most powerful force to get us through all the things that are happening now that worry us. We all enjoyed this book, and her style of writing using her life stories alongside her wisdom and advice.

Our next **Mid-week Manna Meal at the Community Cup in Martinsburg is on Wednesday, June 10, at 6:00 p.m.** We are still looking for people to provide food. Please use this link to sign up to help:

[Perfect Potluck | a free online tool for coordinating meals for groups](#)

**Our next PW gathering will be our year-end picnic on Thursday, June 4, at 11:30 a.m.** Chris Madeo will host us in her entertainment barn in Boonsboro for a potluck lunch and conversation. We will discuss a book or other study for the fall, and our accomplishments during this year. **Donna will be stepping down as co-moderator after the June picnic, so we are searching for the next person to lead the group! Would you like to carry forward the great women's group history of service and fellowship? Please give it prayerful consideration and let me know if you are interested. Training and information will be provided, and you couldn't ask for a better group to lead.**

If you would like to know more about SPC's Presbyterian Women's Group, please join us at our picnic or contact me or anyone else in the group. And ladies in the group, I encourage you to invite someone to the picnic who hasn't been to the meeting for a while, or who might enjoy being part of the group! All are welcome.



## 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:

- \$1,500 for a **girl's high school solar project** in the Congo
- \$1,000 to **EPEC** (Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center)
- \$1,000 to **ANAR** for Palestinian children's programs
- \$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**
- \$1,000** to **West Virginia Rivers and Jefferson County Foundation** for watershed 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.

## HAVE WE ALL BEEN FED?

**Mid-week Manna Meal at the Community Cup in Martinsburg is on Wednesday, June 10, at 6:00 p.m.** We are still looking for people to provide food. Please use this link to sign up to help. [Perfect Potluck | a free online tool for coordinating meals for groups](#)

**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 [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=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](mailto:workintheworldspc@gmail.com)

### **INCLUSION AND EQUITY**

On Sunday, June 14, SPC will celebrate with our own **Pride Service**. Pastor Mary Jane will preach and, of course, **All are Welcome!** Please bring someone who needs to be celebrated.

## **GUNS TO GARDENS**

### ***SPC's Third Guns to Gardens Event: A Great — and Interesting — Success***

We never know how many gun owners or firearms to expect at a Guns to Gardens (G2G) event. Three years in, we found ourselves wondering: Had interest peaked, or would it continue to grow? Would we have enough volunteers and equipment?

On May 2, we got our answer early. Cars began lining up before the event even started — and the line never stopped. By day's end, we had dismantled 60 firearms, including 10 semi-automatic rifles. We dismantled 27 guns in 2023, 42 in 2024, and 5 at a smaller private event in 2025. Gun owners have voluntarily disposed of 134 guns through G2G, to be repurposed into garden tools and art through the RAWTools network.

This year, we were also blessed to welcome the leaders of RAWTools South (Asheville, NC), who trained our tool crew in best practices for safely checking and dismantling firearms. Their expertise greatly improved both the safety and efficiency of our dismantling procedures.

As interest in Guns to Gardens has grown, so has opposition to it. A few days before the event, WV Representative Chris Anders — who represents many SPC members — publicly encouraged supporters to join him at the event to “Save the Guns!” by offering to purchase guns from G2G participants. Around 20 of his supporters gathered at the edge of the Fire Department property holding “Cash for guns” signs.

For the most part, both groups coexisted peacefully, which in itself felt meaningful. But some of his supporters crossed onto Fire Department grounds and approached incoming vehicles, attempting to redirect participants away from G2G. Several gun owners described feeling intimidated, scared, or pressured by the interactions. A few chose to sell their firearms instead, but most continued through the G2G line. While his supporters stood largely idle, our volunteers never stopped. The momentum toward transformation proved stronger that day.

Still, the controversy has taken a toll on the community support we have relied upon in previous years. Although the Sheriff's Department had agreed to provide personnel as they had in the past, officers did not arrive until tensions started to escalate and de-escalation became necessary. In addition, the Shepherdstown Fire Department membership has voted unanimously to discontinue renting its facility to SPC for future G2G events.

Both the Fire and Sheriff's Departments have been invaluable partners in this work, and their withdrawal creates uncertainty about the project's future. Even so, we continue to feel deeply called to this ministry, and we trust the next steps will emerge through collective prayer and discernment. For now, we give thanks, count the many blessings of the day, and catch our breath. We marvel at SPC's wholehearted support for this work, and treasure expressions of relief and gratitude on the faces of those gun owners we have served.

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

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



# *Congratulations to our Graduates!*



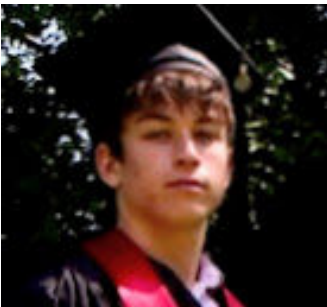
## **SKYLAR BENEDICT**

Skylar is the son of Georgia Jeppesen. He will receive his PhD in Sociocultural and Applied Environmental Anthropology from the University of Arizona, Tucson, upon defense of his dissertation this summer. His research is in collaborative approaches to estuary conservation, environmental racism, and decolonizing forestry policies with field work completed at Kino Bay, Mexico. His future plans—"the sky is the limit."



## **KATHERINE ROSE BORCHARD**

Katherine is the granddaughter of Dave Borchard and lives in Annapolis MD. She graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park, with a B.S. in Architecture. She is already working on becoming an interior designer as a consultant at Calico Corner in Annapolis.



## **ETHAN THOMAS HOBBS**

Ethan is the grandson of Pat Donohoe and lives in Mt. Airy, MD. He graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park, Phi Beta Kappa, with a B.A. and double major in philosophy and criminology. He plans to take a gap year before pursuing an M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy with the goal of becoming a philosophy professor. (Ethan was baptized at SPC in 2004 by Rev. Randy Tremba and his grandmother, Rev. Pat Donohoe, who was the former Associate Pastor.)



## JORDYN KELSO

Jordyn is the granddaughter of Linda Kelso. She graduated from WVU with a B.S. in Exercise Physiology and a minor in Dance. She is currently pursuing careers in her field.



## ADDISON LLOYD

Addison is the granddaughter of Mary Ellen Lloyd and graduated with a B.S. degree in Biology from Chatham University in Pittsburgh. She completed her degree in three years and played soccer for the university women's team. Addie plans to continue her studies with an advanced degree in a Physician's Assistant program. Mary Ellen notes that Addie was critically ill at birth and SPC prayed and prayed for her health, even hosting an eight-hour prayer vigil. She often attended church here until her family moved ten years ago.



## LAURA NEUMARK

Laura is the granddaughter of Larry and Joyce Neumark. Laura graduated *summa sum laude* from Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with a degree in Philosophy and Political Science. She was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa as well as Phi Kappa Phi. She was a two-year member of the women's soccer team and a two-year member of the women's tennis team. She also received an award for having the highest GPA of all senior women athletes. Laura will be pursuing a law degree at George Mason University Law School in the fall.



## MABEL PATCHELL

Mabel is the daughter of Heidi Dobish and Don Patchell. Mabel graduated from Hagerstown Community College with an A.A. degree in English (main interest is Creative Writing). Mabel also gave the student graduation speech at commencement. She will continue her education at Shepherd University in the fall.



## **MAX PATCHELL**

Max is the son of Heidi Dobish and Don Patchell. Max graduated from Hagerstown Community College with an A.S. degree in Computer Science. Max will continue his education at Shepherd University in the fall.



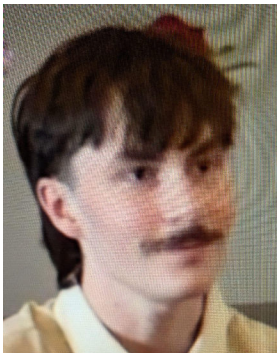
## **ISABELLA TUZZIO**

Isabella is the daughter of Andrew and Jessica Tuzzio. She graduated from West Virginia University with a bachelor's degree in biology and a minor in Spanish. Isabella will begin classes at West Virginia University School of Medicine in July.



## **KEVIN BAKER, JR.**

Kevin is the son of Season and Kelley Jones and graduated in October 2025 from NASCAR Technical Institute in Mooresville, NC, with an Associate of Occupational Studies in Automotive Technology. He was then accepted into and graduated from the Mercedes-Benz Drive program in May 2026 in Jacksonville, FL. He has secured an automotive technician position at Mercedes-Benz of Hampton, VA.



## **MASON BROWN**

Mason is the son of Wendy and Thad Brown. He graduated from Jefferson High School/James Rumsey Technical Institute in the firefighting program. He received his Fire and Rescue certification and hopes to become a firefighter and EMT.



## **LIAM CORRIGAN**

Liam is the grandson of Bill and Mary Jane Hitt and graduated from Berlin High School in Ohio. His main activities in school were playing flute in the marching and symphonic bands and serving as the Teaching Assistant for the woodworking class. He graduated *cum laude* as an Advanced Placement scholar and honors graduate. Liam will enter a five-year bachelor's to master's degree program in architecture at Kent State University in the fall.



## **JILLIAN DILLOW**

Jillian is the child of Sheila Dillow and Judy York. Jillian graduated from Jefferson High School *summa cum laude* and was recognized as a National Merit Finalist. Membership in various clubs included Key Club, National Honor Society, Science National Honor Society, and Computer National Honor Society. Jillian was a varsity swimmer all four years and competed on many academic teams such as WV Envirothon, Math Field Day, MathWorks Math Modeling Challenge, and the HOSA Biomedical Debate Team. Jillian is most proud of recently achieving certification as a West Virginia Master Naturalist. Jillian is headed to Skidmore College in New

York in the fall to study Environmental Science and Statistics. They were one of a handful of students who received the college's Porter/Wachenheim Presidential Scholarship for STEM studies.



## **WILLIAM GIBBS**

William is the son of James and Melinda Gibbs and graduated from Jefferson High School. He played the flute in the marching and symphonic bands. Representing JHS, he was part of the State Championships for Academic Showdown and went to the State Science Fair both his junior and senior years. William was a member of Key Club, National Honor Society, Science Honors Society and Tri-M Music Honors. He is a part of HOSA and will attend their International Leadership Conference in Indianapolis in June. William will

attend Rochester Institute of Technology in New York in the fall and plans to major in Computer Science focusing on Verified Programming.



## **MASON GUEST**

Mason is the grandson of Patti McCarthy and graduated from Spring Mills High School. In school he played lacrosse and enjoyed weight training. He will be working after graduation with the possibility of attending Hagerstown Community College in the future.



## **EMILY MYERS**

Emily is the granddaughter of Linda Kelso. She graduated from Holy Cross Academy and plans to attend a school for special needs students called the Sunshine Project.



## **MATTHEW NEUMARK**

Matt is the grandson of Larry and Joyce Neumark and graduated with honors from St. John's Catholic Prep in Buckeystown, MD. He was Senior Class President, a two-year member of the golf team, and competed in Mock Trial. He will attend Elon University in North Carolina in the fall as an Innovation Scholar majoring in Finance and Economics.



## **CORA WILKINSON**

Cora Wilkinson is the daughter of Rachel and Stuart Wilkinson and graduated from Jefferson High School. She will be attending Manhattan University in New York and studying with the O'Malley Business school as an honors student. She will also be competing with the Acro and Tumbling Team as a Division 1 athlete.