



The Highlander

The Presbyterian Church of Punxsutawney
106 East Union St., Punxsutawney PA 15767
www.punxsypc.net punxsychurch@comcast.net
(814) 938-5560

January 2021

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Please call or email
the office
**by TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 2nd**
with any
information,
announcements,
updates, etc. that
you would like to
see in February's
newsletter!

*Please see the back page for a new way
to connect with Rev. Erin during
the month of January!*

As we enter 2021 and the typically harshest months of winter, please contact the office and/or Property Committee if you notice any issues with the heat, water pipes, etc. so they may be repaired promptly. Thank you!

FROM REV. ERIN KOBS

This month's letter from PCOP's Pastor!

We have entered into a new year – 2021. I don't know about you, but I am grateful to say goodbye to 2020. Oh 2020, you were a lot. The world suddenly came to a screeching halt in late February/early March when COVID-19 became our new reality. The economy took a major hit & lots of folks suddenly found themselves needing unemployment insurance & assistance from food banks. The Presidential election season reached a fevered pitch, bringing the country's division to the forefront. People found themselves in the streets, marching for Black Lives Matter. We spent a lot of time in our homes. For me, in the matter of 12 months, I went from living in Yellow Springs, OH, working as a Residence Life Coordinator to being unemployed & living at home with my family to searching for a new call to moving to Punxsutawney, PA to become your new pastor. It's certainly been a roller coaster of a year!

While we are still waiting for this pandemic to ease & the world to start becoming a little more normal, I am envisioning what 2021 will bring for us as a church. This church has infinite possibilities to be a vital & important part of the Punxsutawney community. But, even more so, we can inject life & light into our membership through a variety of Christian Education opportunities, new & exciting ways to engage in our worship life together, use of technology, & new, additional forms of communication. My hope for PCOP is to find a way to move forward in this new season of life together, remaining open to the idea that God might be calling us into a new thing.

Over the next few weeks of January, I will be committing time to creating some ideas to share with members of Session, our Deacons, & the congregation. One of my big priorities is to make intentional connections with the young people of the church & find ways to create meaningful programming for them. In addition, I want to revamp our Adult education offerings & find ways to provide opportunities for adults of all ages, retired & still working, to have a place to grow in faith & understanding of their relationship with God. I'm passionate about Christian Education & want to make it a priority in my ministry here at PCOP, but I will need your help & support. I am not a one-woman show! I want this to be a collaborative effort. If you are interested in being part of this conversation & vision, please let me know! I'd be happy to have you be a part of it.

2021 is a fresh start. 2021 is a time of vision. 2021 will likely bring its share of challenges. But, I know God will walk with us each step of the journey. I am looking forward to moving out of the "new pastor trying to figure stuff out" phase & begin to engage fully in the ministry of this church. I'm grateful for each of you & for your gifts you bring to this congregation. If I can be of support to you, please do not hesitate to reach out.

New Year blessings,
Erin

AT-HOME WORSHIP FOR JANUARY

Adapted by Debra Dinsmore from lectionary resources

JANUARY 3, 2021 *Epiphany* - Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6 ☩ Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 ☩ Ephesians 3:1-12 ☩ Matthew 2:1-12

Opening or Morning Prayer: Arise, shine; for your light has come. Behold the glory of the Lord. Alleluia!

Read about "The Ingathering of the Dispersed": **Isaiah 60:1-6**

Prayer for Illumination: O God, nations shall come to your light and rulers to the brightness of your dawn. By the compelling radiance of your Spirit, draw me near, reveal your truth, and teach me faithful obedience to your holy Word. Amen.

Read about "The Visit of the Wise Men": **Matthew 2:1-12**

Question for Reflection: Warned in a dream of Herod's evil intentions, the magi "left for their own country by another road." What could it mean for you to take "another road" as the church concludes the celebrations of the Christmas season?

Prayer After Reading: God of every nation, by the light of a wondrous star you led wandering magi to the humble infant Jesus, revealing to them your salvation for the world. In the miraculous and the mundane, in union with all who have glimpsed the light of your grace, lead me to Christ, so that I may offer my worship and serve him with sincerity of heart; for he lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen. **Read** about "a Prayer for Guidance and Support for the King": **Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14**

Read about "Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles": **Ephesians 3:1-12**

Prayer of Intercession: Loving God, in Christ you embrace people of every nation and make them members of the same body, sharers in the promise of the gospel. I pray for the holy church of God, that through its faithful witness the wisdom of God in its rich variety may be known in heaven and earth. Loving God, you judge the people with righteousness and the poor with justice. I pray for nations, rulers, and authorities to forsake violence and be guided by the light of truth, that righteousness may flourish and justice abound in every land. Loving God, wise men from afar came to visit the holy family and found a place of rest and worship. I pray for Punxsutawney and for all who live here, that we may be a community of hospitality, welcoming the stranger and sheltering the refugee. Loving God, in your providence, the land yields prosperity for the people that righteousness may prevail in the land. I pray for our planet earth, that all may dwell peacefully with nature, be good stewards of its resources, and share its abundance for the sake of human flourishing. Loving God, you defend the cause of the poor, give deliverance to the needy, and save those who are oppressed. I pray for those who suffer the cruelty of poverty, and all who endeavor to transform systems of economic injustice. Loving God, you take pity on the weak. I pray for those whose bodies are enfeebled by disease or whose spirits are debilitated by illness, that they may be restored to wholeness of life. Loving God, your servant Paul was imprisoned for preaching the good news of Jesus. I pray for any who are wrongly incarcerated that they may be liberated, and for those whose guilt is valid and imprisonment warranted that they may know genuine repentance of their sin and reconciliation with their community. As a child of God, I am bold to ask for what is needed, confident in your goodness through faith in my Lord and brother, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Closing or Evening Prayer: Loving God, in the journey of life guide me by the star that leads to Jesus, so that I may return to you transformed by his love. Amen.

JANUARY 10, 2021 *Baptism of the Lord* - Readings: Genesis 1:1-5 ☩ Psalm 29 ☩ Acts 19:1-7 ☩ Mark 1:4-11

Opening or Morning Prayer: Living God, maker of light, thank you for the gift of this day. Let me be a light in your world so that people will look at me and see the goodness of your creation; in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Read about "The Creation of the First Day": **Genesis 1:1-5** **Read** about "The Voice of God in a Great Storm": **Psalm 29**

Prayer for Illumination Send down your Holy Spirit, O God— tear open the veil of heaven and speak to me as a beloved child so that I may hear and believe the good news of your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Read about "Paul in Ephesus": **Acts 19:1-7**

Read about "The Proclamation of John the Baptist and about the Baptism of Jesus": **Mark 1:4-11**

Questions for Reflection: What is the difference between baptism with water alone (John's baptism; see Acts 19:3, Mark 1:8) and baptism with the Holy Spirit (baptism into Jesus; see Acts 19:4-5, Mark 1:8)? Why is it still important to use water in baptism? What does water mean in your daily life? What difference does the Holy Spirit make in baptism? What difference does the Holy Spirit make in your daily life?

Prayer of Intercession: In your own words, offer a prayer. There are no wrong ways to pray. Plainspoken or wordy. General or specific. Long winded or short and to the point.

Closing or Evening Prayer: Living God, maker of light, thank you for the gift of this day. Let me be at peace in your presence so that I may find rest, be restored, and live to praise your glory; in Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

AT-HOME WORSHIP FOR JANUARY

Adapted by Debra Dinsmore from lectionary resources

JANUARY 17, 2021 Readings: 1 Samuel 3:1–10, (11-20) ✠ Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 ✠ 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 ✠ John 1:43-51

Opening or Morning Prayer: Almighty God, blessed is the One who comes bringing trustworthy words for the healing of the world. Speak to me Lord, for I, your servant, am listening. **Read** about “The Inescapable God”: **Psalm 139:1–6, 13-18**

Prayer for Illumination: By your Holy Spirit, O God, open my ears, my eyes, my heart, and my mind to the Holy Word so that it comes to rule within me for Jesus’ sake. Amen. **Read** about “Samuel’s Calling and Prophetic Activity”: **1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)**

Questions for Reflection: Where, in what place, and through what person or persons do you hear the call of the Lord? Consider it each day this week. Who has awakened in you a new prayer, a hope, or an insight? Give thanks for those persons and moments as signs of God’s love for you. **Read** about “Glorifying God in Body and Spirit”: **1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

Prayer of Intercession: In your own words, offer a prayer. There are no wrong ways to pray. Plainspoken or wordy. General or specific. Long winded or short and to the point. **Read** about “Jesus Calling Phillip and Nathanael”: **John 1:43-51**

Closing or Evening Prayer: As I journey through this day, O God, I give you thanks for breath and life, for family, neighbors, and friends, and for those whose ways are challenging to my serenity. Help me to give thanks especially for the people who pull me to new understandings and show me sides of life that I have not known or do not welcome. Urge me to follow you always; in Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

JANUARY 24, 2021 Readings: Jonah 3:1-5, 10 ✠ Psalm 62:5-12 ✠ 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 ✠ Mark 1:14-20

Opening or Morning Prayer: Loving God, no matter what I am facing today— mourning or gladness, isolation or fellowship— help me to focus on you throughout it all. Amen. **Read** about “The Conversion of Nineveh”: **Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

Read about “the Passing Away of the Present Form of this World”: **1 Corinthians 7:29-31**

Prayer for Illumination: Speak to me your word, O God, so that I may be reminded that my salvation comes from God. My soul waits in silence for God alone and He is my rock and my salvation. God is my fortress; I shall never be shaken. Amen.

Read about “A Song of Trust in God Alone”: **Psalm 62:5-12**

Questions for Reflection: Psalm 62 ends by saying, “God, you repay to all according to their work.” Some of us may find that statement unsettling. Would you rather have God treat you with the payment you deserve or with the grace that you hope for in Jesus Christ?

Prayer of Intercession: In your own words, offer a prayer. There are no wrong ways to pray. Plainspoken or wordy. General or specific. Long winded or short and to the point.

Read about “The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry and about Jesus Calling the First Disciples”: **Mark 1:14-20**

Closing or Evening Prayer: Loving God, thank you for the assurance that I live forgiven and loved by you. I need your grace and want to share your grace with others. As I face the coming night, help me to pour out my heart to you and then rest in peace. Amen.

JANUARY 31, 2021 Readings: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 ✠ Psalm 111 ✠ 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 ✠ Mark 1:21-28

Opening or Morning Prayer: In the light of your new day, O God, I rise to greet you always on the path in front of me. Let me follow with integrity where you will lead. Give me courage to know the difference between what is false and what is true. Teach me to love my neighbor as you love me. Amen. **Read** about “A New Prophet Like Moses”: **Deuteronomy 18:15-20**

Read about “Food Offered to Idols”: **1 Corinthians 8:1-13**

Prayer for Illumination: Almighty God, Light from Light, who commands the universe and all that is made, your Word is the power that makes whole what is broken, the force of good, and the food of peace. Teach me now as you taught in the synagogue. Heal me now so that in all that I say and do, the freedom I have in you may be for others, too; in Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Read about “The Man with an Unclean Spirit”: **Mark 1:21-28**

Questions for Reflection: What is the name of the demon, the spirit, the idolatry you carry? If you can think of this answer as many “troubles,” try to find the root cause, a name to give to that which needs to be cast out. The answer may take different forms throughout the week. You may also consider the same question with regard to your family and to this nation. What is the Holy One casting out today in your presence?

Prayer of Intercession: In your own words, offer a prayer. There are no wrong ways to pray. Plainspoken or wordy. General or specific. Long winded or short and to the point.

Read about “Praise for God’s Wonderful Works”: **Psalm 111**

Closing or Evening Prayer: Heavenly Father, you are the power above all powers, the healer who knows my every need. You guide me through each day and give me rest to renew my tired body and mind. Guard me and keep me in your care always. Amen.

FINANCE & GENEROSITY

Thank you for donating funds, time, and energy to PCOP!

Date	Attendance in worship	Weekly offering	% to General Fund
December 6	N/A (<i>online</i>)	\$5,040.00	98.02%
December 13	N/A (<i>online</i>)		
December 20	N/A (<i>online</i>)	\$2,443.00	81.87%
December 24	N/A (<i>online</i>)		
December 27	N/A (<i>online</i>)		

DECEMBER 2020 FINANCIAL HEALTH			
	Current	Year to Date	2020 Total Budget
Receipts	<i>December 2020 Financial Health information was not provided in time for the January newsletter. Look for it in the February edition.</i>		\$182,771.00
Expenses			
Excess or [Deficient]			

PLEASE MAIL your regular weekly offering envelopes to the office while worship services are virtual—**DO NOT** drop them off at the office.

The **Initial Offering envelope** is the first envelope in each box of offering envelopes provided by PCOP. Unlike the other envelopes, this one is not dated and the offerings received go into the Initial Offering Fund rather than the Current/General Fund, Deacons Fund, PCUSA Special Offerings Funds, Loose Offering Fund (cash/change not in envelopes), etc.

The face of the envelope is printed with a short Prayer and Dedication to emphasize the importance of contributions to the church and the prayerful consideration that these gifts deserve. Congregants may reflect on how their financial gifts throughout the year will help to maintain and grow PCOP as a whole.

Unlike the PCUSA Special Offerings envelopes throughout the year, the envelopes are not pre-printed with suggested contribution amounts—most Initial Offering contributions received at PCOP are in the range of \$5 to \$10 to simply mark the start of the new year and dedicate the new box of offering envelopes for future regular contributions.

The Initial Offering may be received at any time, but at PCOP most contributions are made either in conjunction with offering envelopes dated for the first or second Sunday of January, or as a replacement for the offering envelopes dated for the first or second Sunday of January.

**Monthly Giving
Spotlight:
Initial Offering**

MEMBERSHIP & PCOP UPDATES

Birthdays, prayer requests, moving and more!



*Address Change: Mrs. Marjorie Brennan
Jefferson Court
417 Route 28
Brookville PA 15825*



HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO . . .



Those Needing Our Prayers

Marge Brennan	Duane & Pam Carr	Betty Cessna
Kate Doverspike	The Graham Family	Martha Irvin
	Kathy Kopp	

January 20	Doug Chambers
January 21	William Deeley
January 30	Keri Isenberg
January 31	George West

Please contact the **office** to add a name to the newsletter/bulletin "Needing Our Prayers" list. Please contact **Rex Lettie** at pcop.prayer.chain@gmail.com to join or to add a name to the PCOP Prayer Chain.

2021 Offering Envelopes, Membership Directory & Calendars

2021 PCOP materials will be available on a table outside the Memorial Parlor [through Friday, January 8th](#).

Please use the side entrance located on the left side of the parking lot to enter the building and get your materials during office hours.

We encourage members to coordinate with family and friends for pickups and contactless drop-offs to help those who may not be able to come to the building. Please contact the office if you are unable to make arrangements.



Our Christian sympathies to Lynz Bowers on the passing of her grandfather, George Bowers, on Thursday, December 10, 2020.



Our Christian sympathies to Amy Adams and family on the passing of her stepmother, Wanda Adams, on Sunday, December 20, 2020.



Our Christian sympathies to the family and friends of Ann Mumper, who entered into eternal rest on Sunday, December 27, 2020.

SESSION & THE BOARD OF DEACONS

Keeping up with the committees and officers of PCOP!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The next meeting of the Board of Deacons will be:
SUNDAY JANUARY TBD
9:30 a.m.
Memorial Parlor

The next meeting of Session (Unicameral Board)
will be:
MONDAY JANUARY 18th
7:00 p.m.
Lester Seminar Room

Sunday, January 10th, 2021

Congregational Meeting

following the Zoom worship meeting
(please remain logged on or phoned in to participate)

More information will be available closer to the date.
Please email Committee Reports to the office
by Friday, January 8th!

Crosstown Ministries Food Pantry
Woodland Avenue United Methodist Church
203 Woodland Ave.
January 18th @ 5:30 P.M.

*Please contact Woodland Ave @ (814) 938-8160 for more information
about volunteering opportunities.*

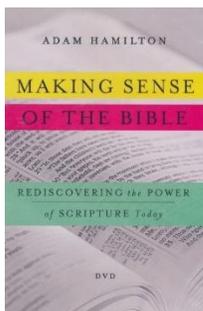
WHO DO I CONTACT?

“I have a question about . . .”

Schedules, quarterly financial statement, newsletter, ordering flowers, bulletin information, ordering church supplies, using church facilities, etc. <i>And anything else!</i>	Keri in PCOP office
Hospitalizations, Emergencies, Member Care	Keri in PCOP Office Board of Deacons
PCOP Property & Grounds, maintenance requests	Property Committee Co-Chairs Dana Hartman & William Cooper
Worship information, pulpit supply	Worship Committee Chair Roberta Dinsmore
Baptisms & Weddings	Clerk of Session Doug Chambers
Funerals & Memorial Services	Keri in PCOP Office Funeral Director
Mission & Fellowship Opportunities	Mission & Outreach Chair—Rex Lettie Fellowship Chair—Barbara Burkett
Youth Group & Children’s Sunday School	Youth Group—Dana Hartman Christian Education Chair—
Finances & Giving	Finance Chair—Nick Suntheimer Stewardship Chair—Richard Fetterman
New Members (Joining PCOP)	Clerk of Session Doug Chambers
Choir & Music	Music Director Nancy Pearce
First Tuesday Community Meal	Donna Anderson
Current Members of Session	William Cooper, Dana Hartman, Rex Lettie, Barbara Burkett, Deborah Elder, Nick Suntheimer, Roberta Dinsmore, David Divelbiss
Current Board of Deacons	Lee Blose, Kathi Cessna, Jean Hughes, Debra Dinsmore, Carole Haire, Donna Grabany, Richard Cessna, Barbara Endress, Pam Hogan

JANUARY 2021 CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><i>Worship and Tuesdays @ 10 have gone virtual!</i> <i>At time of publishing, all other activities remain suspended.</i></p>					1 New Year's Day—Office is CLOSED	2
3 2 nd Sunday of Christmas	4 5 P.M. Virtual Porch w/Erin	5	6 Epiphany of the Lord	7 11 A.M. Virtual Porch w/Erin	8	9
10 Baptism of the Lord Congregational Meeting	11	12	13 11 A.M. Virtual Porch w/Erin	14	15	16
17 2 nd Sunday after Epiphany	18 5:30 P.M. Crosstown Food Pantry 7 P.M. Session Meeting	19 5 P.M. Virtual Porch w/Erin	20	21	22	23
24 3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	25 11 A.M. Virtual Porch w/Erin	26	27	28	29	30
31 4 th Sunday after Epiphany	Feb. 1	Feb. 2 February newsletter info deadline				



Tuesdays @ 10 A.M. Zoom Meetings

***Making Sense of the Bible* by Adam Hamilton**

Links to the Zoom meeting will be emailed to the congregation when available. Please contact the office or Rev. Erin Kobs if you want to participate, but have not received the link.



106 East Union Street
Punxsutawney, PA 15767

Office hours: 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.
Monday thru Friday

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Email: punxsychurch@comcast.net

Visit online at www.punxsypc.net



Virtual Porch Conversations with Erin

It occurred to me that due to the ongoing pandemic, many of you have not had the chance to talk with me & get to know me. I would like to offer some opportunities to meet with me via Zoom during the month of January. It will be rather informal, but a chance for you to ask me questions & for me to get to know you all as well. We can share a cup of coffee or tea together, like a virtual porch conversation!

Monday, January 4th at 5:00pm
Thursday, January 7th at 11:00am
Wednesday, January 13th at 11:00am

Tuesday, January 19th at 5:00pm
Monday, January 25th at 11:00am

The links for each meeting will come out with the weekly emails along with the worship Zoom links. You can connect with video on your computer/tablet or you can simply phone in to join the conversation. I look forward to our conversations with one another!