

FALL 2023



God has made everything beautiful for its time; moreover, God has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

Ecclesiastes 3: 11

As the summer days gradually shorten and we approach a new year of ministry together, there is always a sense of excitement in the air as the church gears up for another fall season. The beginning of a new church year is an opportunity to come together to lift one another in learning together, with worship and prayer. With hearts full of hope and faith, reenergized by the summer, we can all embrace this opportunity to grow and serve Christ and seek the welfare of the community around us.

In the face of the uncertainties and challenges in our community and world, gathering offers a solace. Worship invites us to trust in God and each other, to be fully present in the here and now, accepting that we may not fully comprehend what is happening all around us in the news of the day. In community, we can be inspired and find peace knowing that there is time for finding beauty in our lives each day. Often, it

is in community that we can best find that beauty and recognize God's presence in the midst of it.

As we navigate the various seasons of the year, may we think about the wisdom of Ecclesiastes 3:11 and embrace the moments of worshipping, living, and serving together. May we find meaning and the beauty of the journey in the ongoing presence and work of God.

The Sacrament of



the First Sunday of the Month

The Sacrament of Holy Communion (sign of God's gracious promise and lifegiving Word) is ordained by Christ. Holy Communion is also known as the Lord's Supper, the Breaking of Bread, and the Eucharist. Communion is gluten free and served in self contained cups. Communion will be taken at your seat.

Child Care Provided for Worship Services



Children of all ages are always welcome in worship. However, child care is still available for younger children - ages birth through kindergarten - during worship as needed.



Wanting to reach us?

Katherine and Rob are most often in the church office Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings. Other times are spent in visitation, study groups, and committee and community meetings.

If you would like to meet with us in person, we can schedule a time. We are both available by email: rklouw@gmail.com or revkatherinerandall@gmail.com. Emails are generally returned within 24 hours. If you have not received a response, please contact us again – sometimes emails will get caught in cyberspace or in the server that routes the emails. If you would like to talk to us by phone, and we are not currently at the church, you can leave a message with the office. We can also be reached more immediately by cell phone: 558-4453 (Katherine) or 558-8464 (Rob). Please do not hesitate to contact us as needed during an emergency or time of crisis.

Sharing Pastoral Concerns

If you have a pastoral concern for yourself, a family member, or friend, please contact Katherine or Rob. We do not receive

notification of hospital admissions; please contact us or the church directly - we want to know how you are doing!

If you have a prayer concern that you would like to have in the weekly prayer list in the bulletin, please contact Kenra (church secretary) in the church office at 362-5569. This list is periodically reviewed. If a name is removed but desired to remain on or be placed back on, please contact Kenra. ones.

Weekly Church Email Updates



We send weekly emails with worship information and other updates on Saturdays. This email is also shared to our First Presbyterian Church Facebook page. If you are not receiving this email, please let us know. We do have a small weekly mailing we do for people who do not use email. We want to be sure that you are connected and getting the most up to date news from church!



from Regina, Director of Music/Organist

It's happening! On Sunday, September 10th, the 2023-2024 Cathedral Choir season begins! Rehearsal is at 10:00 am in the Chapel followed by us singing at the 11:00 am Worship service. We would like to invite you to come join us! If participating in the choir on a weekly basis seems too overwhelming, you

should consider coming when you can or committing to singing for several weeks in a row. We are a joyful, faith-filled, friendly group of people always looking to expand our circle of friends. This energizing and lively ministry is the ideal place to share the love of singing together, rekindle old friendships, and make new.



on Sunday Mornings ...

Coffee, tea and or hot water will be available in the library each Sunday morning before the 11 o'clock service.



... from Property Manager

We look forward to the change of season each year which includes the traditional Fall events, putting deck furniture and decorations away, schools reopening, and pulling out the warmer jackets and sweaters. As the temperatures get cooler and the leaves magically change into bright shades of red, orange, and yellow, we offer thanks for our blessings we have to live in this area where we work, worship, share each season, family and community events, and friendships. Enjoy and be thankful!

From the Property Committee: The building repair &

maintenance work continues with J. Fiske, Sr., LLC. The boiler inspections were completed in early April and the required work on the hot water boiler has been completed. The steam boiler has developed a leak in one or more of the cast iron coils. Due to the boiler's age and high cost of replacement parts, the process has begun to replace it. Water samples from the drinking fountain have been tested and passed the PA DEP's standards - the fountain is reopened for use. A men's room steam heat source is expected to be replaced with electric heat. As summer winds down, parking lot repairs, along with the fall lawn treatment and landscape maintenance are planned.

Thank you to the following volunteers for their recent help in the church – Jim Bouquin, Delaney Bridge, Jonah Bridge.

If you have any observations, suggestions, or ideas, please feel free to contact me – my door is always open.

Yours in Christ,
Jerry

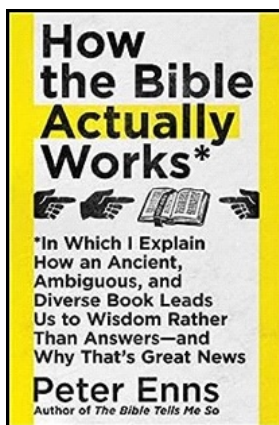
"Except the Lord build the house,
they labor in vain that build it.
Psalm 127:1

Sunday School for Children and Youth
beginning September 10th
Sunday Mornings 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
in the Upstairs Youth Room



Children and youth of all ages are invited to join us weekly for Sunday School, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. in the Youth Room. We will be following the themes and scripture for each week's worship service as we explore stories, games, and crafts together. In September, we will explore stories of Moses and the Exodus, and the commandment to love our neighbor as ourself.

Adult Sunday School
beginning September 10th
Sunday Mornings 9:15 – 10:00 a.m. in the Rankin Room



This year for Adult Sunday school, we will meet at 9:30 a.m. in the Rankin Room, exploring “How the Bible Actually Works” by Peter Enns. It is a thought-provoking book which will help us dive into a fresh understanding of the Bible. Drawing on insights from Enns book, we will learn about diverse genres, ancient cultural context, and a deeper appreciation for the Bibles complexities.

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

Small group and conversation opportunities are available to members and friends of First Church on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Watch bulletins and emails for days which the groups will not meet.

We hope that you will join us in the auditorium or on Zoom as we explore the stories of Scripture.

‘Welcome Back to Fall Worship and Sunday School’
Potluck Lunch
September 10th following 11:00 a.m. Worship Service



A ‘Welcome Back to Fall Worship and Sunday School’ will be celebrated on Sunday, September 10th. At this time, chapel worship will begin at 8:30 a.m. and sanctuary worship will return to 11:00 a.m. A potluck lunch will be held in the auditorium immediately following the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Please bring a dish to share. Fried chicken, coffee, tea, bottled water, and place settings will be provided. All members and friends are invited and encouraged to attend worship and lunch.



New Members:

Baptism -

August 13, 2023 Lyla Jane Ericson Weaver, infant daughter of Zachery Leo Weaver and Lara Nicole Ericson born on 2/24/23

“Let the little children to come unto me ...”

Deaths -

April 28, 2023 Craig W Redington
July 20, 2023 Eugenia (Jean) Piper Nelson
July 23, 2023 Kurt Laemmer
August 21, 2023 James Lovell

“I am the resurrection and the life ... “

Blessing Box Donations

The Blessing Box offers welcomed assistance for hunger with non-perishable items to the community. These donated items are provided by church members and the community as a whole. These



generous efforts and donations are greatly appreciated and always welcomed. Donations can be left in the church office. The generous outpouring of compassion and giving shows what a caring community we proudly live in. Thank you!



Youth Gatherings for Youth in Grades 6 - 12
September 2023

Sunday, September 10th – 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

at Rob and Katherine's House

Join us for some fun, conversation, and food outside – we'll grill hamburgers and hot dogs! Friends are welcome.

Sunday, September 24th – 3:00 – 4:15 p.m. at Church

followed by Church-wide Dine Out Night at Sprague's

Join us for some fun and games. If you'd like to join us for the trip to Sprague's, please let us know so we can make sure we have enough space for everyone in cars! Cost of dinner is on your own.

Save the Date: Presbytery Youth Overnight Event Saturday, November 4th – Sunday, November 5th.

Watch for updates to the schedule for the rest of the fall!



Lord, let me be a living link
That forms a constant chain of prayers.
May every word I say or think
Evidence that I am one who cares.

May my position in the chain
Be proven well. Let me be strong
To help when sorrow or when pain
Has rutted deep, has tarried long.

Lord, make the chain of prayers long
Until the word can feel its power,
And forge my link that I be strong
to bear the burdens of the hours.

- Edna Schultz

Those of you who may have special prayer request are asked
to phone anyone on the Prayer Chain or the church office
(362-5569)

Members of the Prayer Chain are:

Patty Graybill	Becky Danias	Connie Barraclough
Loisanne Bay	Holly Spittler	Kay DeCorte
Sandy Lyter	Marilyn Roslinski	Ellie Thumpston
Jeanette Matto	Nancy Dryden	Lettie Torrey

We thank these women who have volunteered to move your
prayer request long the phone lines.

"Dine out Night"
Sunday, September 24th, 5:00 p.m.



A "Dine Out Night" will be held on Sunday, September 24th, at
5:00 p.m. at Spragues in Portville. Members and friends of the
church are invited and encouraged to attend these evenings of
fellowship and good food. Cost of the dinner is your
responsibility.

Those wishing to attend are encouraged to meet at the church
at 4:15 p.m. to car pool.

CHOIR



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5TH, at 5:30 p.m.
Home of Ron & Morgan Binder
119 Congress St

Members and 'wanna be' members of the Cathedral Choir are invited to the home of Ron & Morgan Binder for a potluck dinner on Thursday, October 5th, at 5:30 p.m. Those attending are asked to bring a dish to share.

If you have not been a part of the choir but wish to be a part of this group or just want to find out what it is like, please join with other at this potluck dinner. You will be most welcome!



for Youth in Grades 8 and Higher
Information Meeting – Sunday October 1st
First Confirmation Meeting – Sunday, October 22nd

Young people who are interested in exploring their faith and what it means to “officially” join First Presbyterian Church are invited to participate in this year’s Confirmation group. Youth in grades 8 and higher are welcome.

We will have an information meeting for families right after the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday, October 1. Our first meeting will be Sunday, October 22nd, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. (includes lunch).

If you have any questions, please contact Katherine or Rob.



Bootlegger, Bullets & Blood by Sally Ryan Costik

Donated by Anita Herbert, MD

This looks at Bradford’s history during the time of Prohibition. This information is taken from the newspapers of Olean and Bradford and tells of the gangsters, bootleggers and local and county law enforcement officers.

The Bradford Oil Refinery by Sally Ryan Costik

Donated by Anita Herbert, MD

This book showcases the company’s evolution from a fledgling refinery along the Kendall Creek to the sophisticated operation of today.

From Pithole to Pqaradise by John L Young

Donated by Anita Herbert, MD

Ban Hogan was once dubbed the wickedest man in the world. His life was a series of boom to bust businesses filled with murder and violence until he heard a Temperance speaker which lead to q spirituql conversion. He spent the the rest of his life doing good.

Tiny Tales by Alexander McCall Smith

Donated by Debbie Price

This is a collection of 30 short stories with witty cartoons that explore romance, ambition, kindness and happiness.

The Corsican Caper by Pete Mayle

Given in memory of Marilyn Smith by Jennifer Smith
Billionaire Francis Reboul is vacationing in France waiting for friends when he sees a large yacht who's passage seems too interested in his villa. Russia tycoon Oleg Vronsky will stop at nothing to get it. This boo brims with twist, sparkliing scenery and mouthwtering gustatory interludes.

A Song of Comfortable Chairs by Alexander McCall Smith

Grance Makula's husband has an international firm attempting to undercut the prices on his chairs with uncomfortable and poor quality furniture and undermining his livelyhood. Grace is approached by an old friend who has a troubled son. Grace and Mma Ramatswe work to solve these problems with kindness, generosity and good sense.

The Other Family Doctor by Karen Fine, DVM

Given in memory of Jane Shaw by by Dick & Nancy
All Creatures Great and Small meet Being Mortal is how this memoir of a woman's dream to becoming a veterinarian has been described. Dr Fine shares all her touching, joyful, heartbreaking and life affirming tales as a vet caring for our pets and how that teaches us to take better care of ourselves especially when life seems to be precarious.

Strawberry Lane by Jodi Thomas

Given in memory of Jane Shaw by Dan & Emily Zinsner
In a small Texan town, where most families go back generations, four strangers meet and unite as they bury a father none of them has ever seen. They begin slowly to piece together a bond that will not only change them but the community for better.

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver

Donated by Holly Spittler

This IS A Pulitzer Prise winning book. It is a story of a boy born in the Southern Applachia to a teenage single mother with no asset beyond his dead father's good looks, a caustic wit and a fierce talent for survival. He tells of his tales of the perils of foster care, child labor, addiction, disastrous love and crushing losses. Dicken provide this book's inspiration.

God Uses Cracked Pots, Normal is Just a Setting on Your Dryer, and Under His Wings by Patsy Clairmont

This three in one book is a sidesplitting, heartwarming collection of anecdotes that turns everyday events into humorous memories.

Something to Hold Onto by Ann Hajdu Hultburg

Donated by Holly Spittler

Local author, Ann Hajdu Hultburg has put together a collection of essays based on her family and life experiences. She tells some of her father's story of escaping from Communist Hungary to her often hilarious and poignant reminiscences of her life growing up as a baby boomer child of a first generation daughter of an immigrant in rural Pennsylvani.

Dreamland by Nicklas Sparks

Given in memory of Jane Shaw by Gordon & Janice Ernest
This is a love story about risking everything for a dream and whether it is possible to leave the past behind. Coby once felt destined for a career in music until a tragedy stopped his dream. He meets Morgan Lee who has graduated with a music degree and moves to Nashville to become a star. She and Coby complete each other and fall in love. Beverly flees heer abusive husband with her son and tries to rebuild her life. Running short on money, she makes desperate decisions. Fate will draw these three people together forciing them to face whether a dream can survive the past.

The Joy and Light Bus Company by Alexander McCall Smith

An old friend of Mr J L B Matekoni approaches him about a new business opportunity Mma Ramotswe attempts to stop it since he will need to mortgage his property to help finance the business. Mma Ramotswe's case involves a man who feels that the woman taking care of his elderly father is "evil" because his father has willed some of his property to her.

Marmee by Sarah Miller

Given in memory of Jane Shaw by Dick & Nancy Dryden
This is a re-telling of Little Women from the perspective of Margaret "Marmee" March about the larger real-world challenge behind the cozy domestic concerns that we know and love in the Little Women book. This is a portrait of the paragon of virtue known as Marmee, a wife left behind, a mother pushed to the brink and a woman with secrets.

Marple by Agatha Christie

Given in memory of Jane Shaw by Anne & Jim Bouquin
Twelve new Miss Marple-style mysteries written by a number of outstanding mystery writers of today.

Warm It Forward – McKean



First Church will again be participating in this multi-generational, community-wide project, Warm It Forward -

McKean, to provide hats, gloves, mittens, coats, scarves, and blankets to the community in the coldest part of the year. We participate together as partners with other groups, working to broaden this effort across our community and raise awareness of homelessness and poverty.

Articles of warmth are placed on a clothesline hung on our front lawn during the coldest of months, January, and on into February. The Zonta Club Bradford coordinates with the church to keep our clothesline full.

If you would like to contribute clothing articles, please leave them in the donation box in the library or in the front office. Thank you!



General Fund

M Jane Shaw	Sandra Lyter
Kurt Laemmer	Dean Bauer

Mac Sue Organ Fund

Eugenia Piper Nelson	Jim & Lisa Evans
Kurt Laemmer, DDS	Jim & Lisa Evans
James Lovell	Jim & Lisa Evans

Memorial Garden Fund

Daniel Constello	Kenra Tyger Ken & Amy Tyger Jamie & Yvonne Tilford
Bert Marovich, Jr	Kenra Tyger Ken & Amy Tyger Jamie & Yvonne Tilford
William Woodring	Kenra Tyger Ken & Amy Tyger
James Lovell	Kenra Tyger



Date	In Memory of:	Given by:
Sept 3, 2023	Russell & Louise Jordan Joyce Jordan	Fred, Dale, Karen & Paul
Sept 10	Mr & Mrs Forest Franks, Sr Forest Franks, Jr Judith Songer	the family
	James & Marian Cousins William Johnson	the family
Sept 17	Ralph Detweiler & Other Loved Ones	Janet Detweiler

Sept 24		
Oct 1`		
Oct 8		
Oct 15	Donald G Bouquin John C Knight Fred C Bouquin John & Gloria Getz	Jim, Anne & Jennifer Bouquin the family
Oct 22	Gus Crissman & Other Loved Ones	Mary Ann & family
Oct 29	Jack C Hermes Mr & Mrs John D Hermes	
Nov 5	Justin Colin Kellam & Other Loved Ones	Colin & Molly Heron
Nov 12	Robert & Charlotte Mintz Gregory Mintz	Dr & Mrs Gilbert Mintz Gail Mintz Lesh & family Becky Mintz & family
Nov 19	Grif & Mary Downs Herold's Wedding 1929, their daughters Marianne McNair and Dianne Warner and their relatives and friends of this church Harriet VanNette Jack C & Genevive VanNette Leslie Guenther Susan Sinclair Enos & Alene Sage	their son, J Downs, representing their families of 6 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren Linda VanSciver their children
Nov 26		
Dec 3	Ted & Onnolee Vogdes	Natasha Lynn (Vogdes) Holiday & Tom Vogdes
Dec 10	Charlene Redington Coburn	the family
Dec 17	CHRISTMAS Memorials	
Dec 24	CHRISTMAS Memorials	

Dec 31	CHRISTMAS Memorials	
--------	---------------------	--

Please note ... There are several open dates on the flower calendar. if you would like to place flowers in the church in memory of or in honor of a loved one or friend. Please phone Kenra at 362-5569.



The following is a report of budget income and expense as of August 29th

Budgeted Receipts:

Pledged money	\$	94,719.63
Non-Pledge money	\$	8,174.42
Prior year	\$	450.00
Loose Offering	\$	939.06
Per-Capita Receipts *	\$	2,257.00
Initial Offering *	\$	189.00
Use of Bldg Donations	\$	655.00
Endowment Fund	\$	132,000.00
TOTAL Budged Receipts	\$	239,384.11

Budgeted Disbursements:

Ministry of the Word	\$	82,883.43
Worship & Music	\$	21,008.72
Benevolence	\$	10,746.95
Nurture	\$	14,949.26

Maintenance/Exp	\$	60,949.96
Administrative/Office	\$	42,295.65
TOTAL Budgeted Disburs	\$	232,833.97

Members are reminded that the each member * per-capita assessment for 2023 is \$33.00. All who pay this, help offset the total amount the church is required to pay.

Also, the Initial Offering envelope gifts help defray the cost of offering envelopes. Whatever amount you can place in this envelope helps with this expense.

THANK YOU ALL for your continued support of First Church and its mission.

High School Graduates

Michael Patrick Colligan

Michael graduated from Maryville High School in Tennessee. He will continue his education and wrestling career at Midway University in KY. He is the son of Michael & Nicole Colligan and the grandson of Gae Colligan and the late Mike Colligan.





Brett Danias-Skaggs

Brett, the son of Bradley J Skaggs and Kathleen M Danias and grandson of Becky Danias and the late James Danias, graduated from Bradford Area High School. His future plans are to enter the workforce full time.

Amber Eschrich

Amber graduated from Bradford Area High School summa cum laude. She is the daughter of Andy & Lynn Eschrich and the granddaughter of Don & Patty Graybill. Her future plans include attending the University of Pittsburgh main campus to study communications.



Emma Katherine Tyger



Emma graduated from Bradford Area High School magna cum laude. Emma is the daughter of Ken & Amy Tyger and the granddaughter of Jeanette Runyan & Richard Davis, Paul Runyan and Kenra Tyger and the late Max Tyger, Jr. A member of the National Honor Society, she was on the distinguished honor roll throughout high school. She served on Student Council

and lettered in volleyball. Emma's plans include attending Penn State main campus to study Veterinary and Biomedical Services followed by a veterinary school after earning her Bachelor's degree.

University/College Graduates

John Belleville

John graduated from Alfred State College. He studied electrical construction and is working for an electrical contractor in Allegany, NY. John is the grandson of Lettie Torrey.

Logan John Caruso

Logan graduated from St Bonaventure University with an MBA. He is the son of Mike & Katie Caruso, grandson of Janice Caruso and great-grandson of the late M Jane Shaw. Logan has accepted a position with Ernst & Young Accounting firm in Buffalo, NY.



John Daniel Fedak



Danny is the son of John & Lisa Fedak, brother of Bailey Fedak and grandson of Jack & Lil Fedak, Mickey Swackhamer and the late Dan Swackhamer. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh main campus magna cum laude with a dual degree in Neuroscience & Psychology, a minor in Chemistry, and concentration in French. He has been a member of the Pitt Swim Club and Beta Theta Pi Fraternity. Danny's future plans are to work at Western Psychiatric Hospital

as a therapist and attend graduate school for neuroscience research.

Andy, a graduate of the University of New Hampshire is the son of Jeffrey Hilzinger and Jessica Short, has a brother Jack, and grandson of Fred & Beth Hilzinger and Dan Minich. He received a B A in Communications. Andy's future plans are undecided at this time.

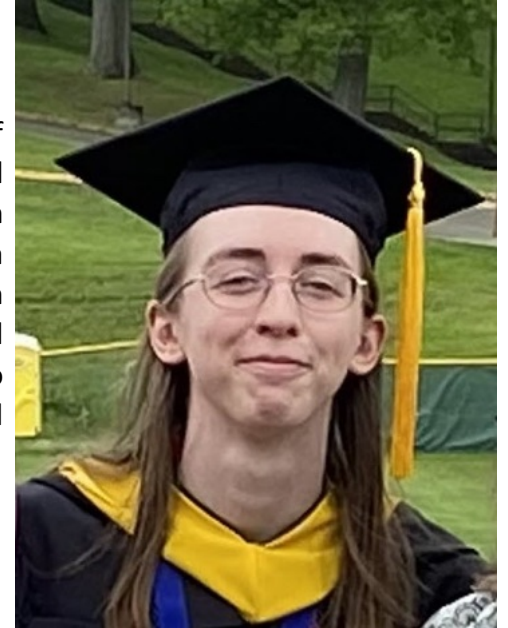
Andrew Hilzinger



Public Library as their Business and Finance Manager. Alexis wants to thank the members of First Presbyterian Church, Sunday School teachers and other that poured life into her, touched her walk, and prayed over her. She is excited to get started in her endeavors in life and adored her grad cap with the following message ... "I trust the next chapter because I know the Author" - Jeremiah 29:11.

Clare Mulcahy

Clare, the daughter of Francis & Mary Mulcahy and sister of Tim, graduated from Saint Vincent College summa cum laude. She has been accepted to graduate school at the University of Iowa to pursue a Ph.D. in integrated biology.



Alexis Huber



Alexis graduated in December 2022 with a Marketing/Communications Bachelor of Science degree with a minor in Finance from Penn State University at Behrend. She walked with her friends for commencement in May to celebrate her accomplishment. Alexis is the daughter of Rob & Lori Huber and granddaughter of Bill & Carol Huber and has a brother, Seth. She is currently employed at the Bradford

Morgan Elizabeth Tyger



Morgan is the daughter of Ken & Amy Tyger and granddaughter of Kenra Tyger and the late Max Tyger, Jr, Jeanette Runyan & Richard Davis and Paul Runyan. She graduated from Penn State University main campus with a Bachelor of Science degree in Hospitality Management. She will be attending Thomas R Kline School of Law at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA this fall.

2023 Montreat Middle School Conference “Igniting a Spark”



In July, youth and adults from our church and First Church of the Covenant in Erie participated in the Montreat Middle School Conference, held each summer at Maryville College in Maryville, TN. They explored the theme “Igniting a Spark” through keynotes, worship, recreation, and small groups. They noticed how God is with us and breaks into the world and our lives, pondered how God is with us and sees us, listened to how God calls us individually and collectively, and celebrated how we are sent out by God into the world. A recreation favorite was the escape room, with our team having the fastest time of the event of all “back home” groups. A worship highlight was the music, led by De’ Patton and Nick “Blue” Setzer, who also

led music at Montreat's College Conference earlier in the year.

Attending the conference from First Presbyterian Church were: Spencer Bridges, Vivien Orris, Blake Randall-Klouw, Mary Randall-Klouw, Rob Klouw (who also served as a small group leader), Madison Neel (who served on work crew – high school students who work long days helping to put on the conference including the large recreation events), Zoe Randall-Klouw (work crew), and Katherine Randall (who serves as adjunct staff for Montreat Conference Center for the conference).

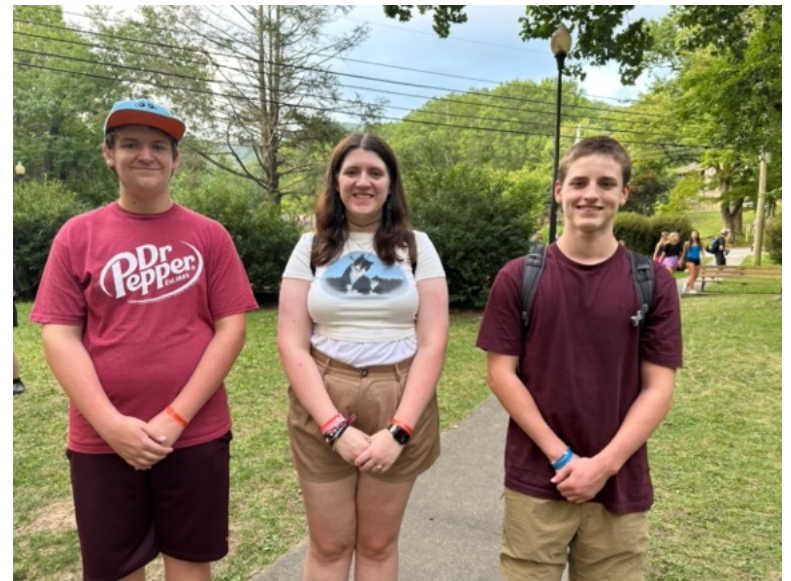
SAVE THE DATE FOR 2024! The Montreat Middle School Conference at Maryville College will be July 16-21, 2024.

2023 Montreat Youth Conference
"In Joy"



In July, youth and adults from our church, the Presbyterian Church of Kane, Pleasantville Presbyterian Church, and First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant in Erie attended the Montreat Youth Conference in Montreat, NC. The theme of this year's conference was "In Joy". Through the week, they explored how God is the source of our joy and we are the source of God's joy, that joy can be complicated – it is not the denial of the brokenness of the world but in defiance of it, that we find joy not as a destination but as a practice, that joy is not a solo act but is found in community, and our joy matters – the world needs our joy. Highlights of the week included a glow party, a barn dance, candlelight worship around the lake, and plentiful bear sightings (including the bear who joined us at candlelight).

Attending the Montreat Youth Conference from First Presbyterian Church were: Madison Neel, Preston Neel, Blake Randall-Klouw, Zoe Randall-Klouw, and Katherine Randall.



(Preston Neel - Madison Neel - Blake Randall-Klouw)

SAVE THE DATE for 2024! We will be attending the
Montreat Youth Conference July 20-27, 2024.

2023 Women's Connection Weekend at Montreat "Seen"

In August, women from our church traveled to Montreat, NC for the Women's Connection Weekend. This year's theme was "Seen" – exploring how God sees us and loves us as we are in the midst of everything that goes on in our lives and in our world. We were led through an amazing Bible study on Hagar by Rev. Dr. Margaret Aymer, the Academic Dean and a Biblical professor at Austin (Presbyterian) Theological Seminary, and enjoyed insightful sermons by Rev. Ellen Crawford True, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Concord, NC. There were wonderful workshops, including hiking, Montreat history, the spiritual practice of writing, hymns, spirituality and the enneagram, and practicing hospitality and welcome in the church. It was a wonderful time and space for renewal. The biggest highlight by far was the opportunity to hear Kate Bowler in person. At the end of her presentation offering a critique of and an alternative to our culture's obsession with "perfectability", she offered this blessing:

A Blessing For Your Beloved, Ordinary Self

Well, God, here we are.
Some days the storm rolls in
and threatens to sweep us all away.
But others are calendar notifications
and wet hair and that sense of unfocused urgency.
Shouldn't I be somewhere?
Hmmm. No?

Well, I suppose it's me and you, Lord.
I would rather scroll through Instagram and Facebook
where, rather conveniently,
I will not feel the need for you,
to cry for you, reach for you.
If I try very hard (or barely at all)
today I might not think of you at all.
Except, if you don't mind,
let me notice you.
Show up in the small necessities and everyday graces.
God, be snacks.
Be water.
Be a walk back in the dark.
Be the loud laughing with the friend who came with me tonight.
Be the gentler tone in my insistence tomorrow
that people pick up after themselves for once.
Be the reason I feel loved
when I catch my own reflection
and feel myself lurching toward self-loathing.
Today, God, be louder than my errands
and my routines
and my easiest routes to escape myself.
Calm my mind,
lift my spirit with your holy one,
and make this absurd, regular night
our prayer of thanks.

Kate Bowler



Anne Bouquin, Suzanne House, Kancie Orris, Erika Close, Katherine Randall, and Zoe Randall-Klouw attended the Women's Connection weekend and would love to share more about it.



gg70817358 GoGraph.com

REQUEST from the ECUMENICAL HOME AUXILIARY

The Bradford Ecumenical Home Auxiliary is asking that we save and donate any unneeded or unwanted costume jewelry to them. This is an ongoing fund raiser for them and funds raised are given to the Ecumenical Home/Chapel Ridge for ongoing needs they may have. Donations of jewelry may be left in the church office Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 3:00 (if after 12:00, please phone the office first - 362-5569) or by phoning Marilyn Roslinski at 366-3500. Your donations are greatly appreciated!