

CLOCK TOWER TIDINGS



Our mission is to share
God's word and the Good
News that Jesus loves us.

Huntingdon Presbyterian Church
Huntingdon, PA 16652
Founded 1789

May 2026

PASTOR'S CORNER

Move Past Tradition of Pessimism

What are the general feelings or impressions we have about our circumstances or prospects? How do we think things are going and what do we think about the future? I've been somewhat fascinated with these questions lately. That has been due in part to a sense of overwhelming pessimism that is hard to miss.

I recently looked up the history of polling on the direction of the country from Real Clear Politics. The data go back to February 2009. Since then, people have said that we are on the "wrong track." There was only one month (June 2009) when there was a tie between
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Photo by Bill Caufield

Kaleidoscope of Butterflies:
Chalmers Port places a yellow
butterfly decoration on a sanctuary
wall for Easter. More on Page 3.

Get Your Bids Ready For Auction On May 2

The annual auction to benefit One Great Hour of Sharing will take place beginning at 2 p.m. in the sanctuary on Saturday, **May 2**.

The auction is a highlight of giving to OGHS, one of the denomination's three annual appeals. Last year, HPC members and friends donated more than \$7,900 to OGHS, including \$2,265 at the auction. If you'd like to donate directly to OGHS, there are envelopes in the back of the sanctuary. The deadline for monetary contributions is Sunday, **May 10**.

OGHS contributions are split among Presbyterian
SEE PAGE 2

UPDATE

Sunday Schedule

Worship is at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. The service is streamed live on Facebook and on demand. Sunday school is at 9:30 a.m. in the Memorial Family Room and also via Zoom.

Dates to Remember

May 2 – OGHS Auction – 2 p.m.
May 5 – Deacons 7 p.m.
May 6 – PW Book Club – 10 a.m.
May 10 – Mother’s Day
May 14 – Ascension Thursday
May 16 – Krislund Open House
May 17 – Session – 6:30 p.m.
May 24 – Pentecost; communion
May 25 – Memorial Day; office closed
May 31 – Trinity Sunday

Food Pantry Donations

The Huntingdon Food Pantry is requesting **spaghetti sauce** for May. Donations can be dropped off near the lift or in the south vestibule.

Worship Attendance

The average in-person Sunday worship attendance over four Sundays in March and April was 56 (including 85 on Easter). Sunday services had an average of 80 live and archived Facebook views.

Weekly Giving

Tithes and offerings through March totaled \$54,507, or an average of \$4,193 a week. Primary Fund giving for 2026 is budgeted at \$190,000, or an average of \$3,654 a week.

Per Capita Contributions

The 2026 per capita assessment is \$41 per member, for a total of \$5,289. As of the end of March, per capita contributions totaled \$716. If possible, please pay your per capita.

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the next newsletter is Friday, **May 15**.

Deacons’ Care List

If you or someone you know would like to be put on the deacons’ Care List, please tell a deacon or call the church office at 814-643-1302.



Photo by Bill Caufield

Kathy Criswell gives an OGHS Minute for Mission on April 12.

OGHS Auction

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Disaster Assistance, Self-Development of People and the Presbyterian Hunger Program. For more than 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need around the world. From disaster response to ongoing community development, the programs give people safety, sustenance and hope.

On a per capita basis, HPC has consistently been among the top congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in its support of OGHS.

Last year’s auction featured more than 70 offerings, ranging from jewelry and collectibles to food. Nearly half of the winning bids went to food items – pierogies, soup, bread, buns, blueberries, maple syrup, eggs and more. The deadline for contributing items for this year’s auction was April 24.

This year’s auctioneers will be Pastor Brett, Paul Post and Zach Byers. Cashiers will be Phil Thompson and Annette Lloyd. The deacons will be on hand to provide snacks for auction-goers.

The auction is organized by the Mission and Outreach Committee, which provided three OGHS Minutes for Mission on Sundays prior to the auction. The Minutes for Mission told how OGHS donations enable the denomination to address disaster relief, housing needs and food insecurity.



Photos by Bill Caufield

Volunteers rummage through decoration boxes.

Butterflies Beautify Sanctuary for Easter

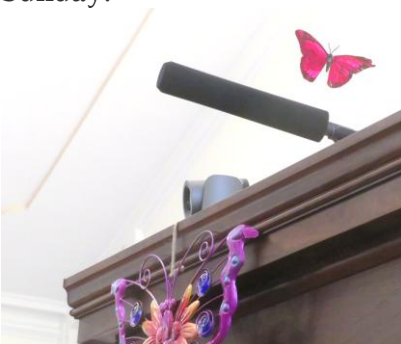
More than a dozen volunteers turned out Saturday morning, May 4, to decorate the sanctuary with butterflies and flowers for the Easter service the next day.

The colorful butterfly decorations throughout the sanctuary resulted in a real kaleidoscope (which church secretary Sylvia Byers points out is the collective noun for a bunch of butterflies).

The decorations came in all sizes. They were mostly made of paper or plastic or metal – plus a few balloons – and required the use of a ladder or pole for placement in more inaccessible spots.

Butterflies are a symbol of Easter – as participants in the March potluck “Family Feud” game learned to their chagrin.

The presence of butterfly decorations during the Easter season commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb on the first Easter Sunday.



Red butterfly decoration appears to hover above audio-visual booth.



Zach Byers adjusts a decoration atop the audio-visual booth.



Sexton Max Byers places a butterfly decoration on the organ pipes above a sanctuary door



Church secretary Sylvia Byers hangs a butterfly beneath a speaker.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Pipe Dream Raises \$229 For Forum Fuel Fund

The first Pipe Dream for 2026 benefitted the Huntingdon Area Forum of Churches' Emergency Utility Fund. Presbyterian Women is happy to announce that \$229.37 was raised.

PW sends a sincere thank-you to the HPC congregation for its continued support.

Marian Sue McElwee brought the Pipe Dream project to PW's attention from a presbytery meeting she attended in 2013. It was officially adopted by the Huntingdon PW chapter – and PW is still asking for quarters to be dropped in the pipes to support local needs in 2026.

The Pipe Dream for April, May and June benefits Bags of Love. Thank you for your quarters – and your cash and your checks.

Book Club Returns May 6 With Novel about Actress

Presbyterian Women's Book Club is back! Please join us at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, **May 6**, in the former choir room to discuss **The Only Woman in the Room**, a novel by Marie Benedict based on the life of actress Hedy Lamarr.

The book takes us to Old Hollywood and World War II, where we meet Hedy Lamarr, a stunning beauty and a stunning mind. Her beauty saved her life; her brilliant mind changed ours.

According to the **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**, the book shines “a spotlight on how often women are omitted from historical records despite the influence and innovations they may have been responsible for” and is a fictionalized “glimpse of a decade in the life of a movie star whose contributions to the world are still felt today.”

PW Ready with Study Of Bible for Lent 2027

Another insightful and challenging Lenten Bible Study concluded March 25 with those attending wishing it could go on for another six weeks.

Presbyterian Women sends a heartfelt thank-you to study leader Anita Nwaobilo, who, as always, was an excellent discussion leader.

Now, on to the 2027 PW/**Horizons** Bible Study. It will be **United through Christ, Bound to Each Other**, a study based on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians by Rhonda Mawhood Lee. Details will be shared as we approach Lent next year.

PW NOTES

Angel Tree Ornaments: Presbyterian Women is grateful to the HPC for the overwhelming response to its last-minute request for angel ornaments to decorate the empty angel trees in the back of the sanctuary during the Christmas holidays. Some 45 angel decorations were delivered to Huntingdon House for clients/residents. PW will continue the “Give an Angel” part of the Angel Tree fundraiser for Christmas this year, incorporating ideas from the well-intentioned yet rushed 2025 experience.

Prayer Chain: Men as well as women can join the Presbyterian Women's Prayer Chain. Just contact Deb Hetrick at 814-643-5424 (home) or 814-644-1653 (cell). If you have a request for the Prayer Chain, Deb's contact info is the same. All prayer chain requests will be kept confidential unless directed otherwise.

Communion on Pentecost

The Lord's Supper will be served at the Pentecost worship service on Sunday, **May 24**. At its February meeting, the session approved the serving of communion once a month – the seven dates already scheduled plus added dates, for a total of 12 times a year. At its March meeting, the session approved the additional 2026 communion dates of Sunday, **June 21**, Sunday, **August 2**, and Sunday, **September 6**.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The session approved the following during its meeting on March 29 held in person and via Zoom:

- Use of the HPC parking lot by the borough during Mayfest, which is scheduled to be held April 25
- Additional communion dates of June 21, August 2 and September 6
- Pastor Suzanne Morelli to preach at HPC on April 3 during the Huntingdon Area Forum of Churches' Good Friday cross walk
- The next meeting of session will be at 6:30 p.m. on May 17

FROM THE DEACONS

During our April monthly meeting, the deacons finalized plans for several church events. On April 26 following worship, we planned to host a spring-themed coffee social. The deacons also planned to provide simple snacks for the One Great Hour of Sharing auction on **May 2**.

Mark your calendars: The annual Strawberry Social will be held following worship on **June 7**.

At our meeting, we also made plans to finalize the purchase of Bibles for the Victory Presbyterian Church in Ghana. Thank you for the generous donations. The final plans will be announced in church.

Finally, please help yourself to cards from the card box found at the back of the church and send your greetings, wishes, thanks, or sympathies to members of our church family. Then place your completed cards in the basket. The deacons will add postage and make sure the cards are mailed. Help brighten someone's day with this outreach.

Scheduling Pastoral Visits

If you would like a pastoral visit, please let the office know, and a visit with Pastor Brett will be scheduled. The office phone is 814-643-1302.



Photo by Bill Caufield

Elder Godfred and his wife Philomina appeared in a pre-recorded message on the Bible mission project shown to HPC congregation on March 29.

Bible Project Raises Nearly Double the Goal

Members and friends of HPC gave \$2,935 – nearly double the \$1,500 goal – to provide Bibles to the Victory Presbyterian Church in Ghana. It was the year's first mission project.

At a cost of about \$10 apiece, \$1,500 would buy some 150 Bibles in both English and Twi, the most widely spoken native language in Ghana, a nation in West Africa.

Jenny Brockett, a nurse who was part of a medical mission team in Ghana last year, will contact the pastor of the Victory Presbyterian Church to assess additional needs that could be addressed by the extra funds. Possibilities include clothing and water purification.

Minutes for mission were given during Sunday worship services at HPC during Lent. On Palm Sunday a recorded message was shown featuring Ghana church Elder Godfred and his wife Philomina. They spoke on the desire to spread God's Word in their community.

The fundraiser was a joint project of the Mission and Outreach Committee and the Board of Deacons. Details of other mission projects for 2026 will be announced when available.

Pastor's Corner

Continued from Page One

“right track” and “wrong track.” So for 17 years most people (sometimes even significant majorities) have said things are going in the wrong direction. A trend that long should be called a tradition.

So why all this pessimism? It's made even more confusing with our generally improving material circumstances. It is true that improvement isn't equally experienced by all. But the average is still better. Perhaps the pessimism comes from deteriorating social connection. Folks report being lonelier than ever. That loneliness isn't likely to improve as few people are forming families or putting down roots in community.

But there might be a bigger reason why we tend to feel so down. It's simply the message we're bombarded with and the message we can't stop consuming. Anger and doom tend to drive engagement and hook attention more than anything else. Each choice we make to listen to those types of stories makes it more and more likely that we will keep encountering them. It's a cyclical problem. Media makes angry, end-of-the-world content, then we consume it.

Attitudes of doom are not new in human history. Many of the people Jesus interacted with had a similar perspective. They resented the occupation of the Romans and the corruption of their leader who collaborated with them. These zealots preached the end of the world was near because God's Messiah was about to appear to lead them in battle. The compromised Pharisees and Sadducees also spread fear, fear of what would happen if Rome's wrath was stirred up. Fear is so often the currency of control. It can keep regimes in power or overthrow them. And there is always someone who benefits.

Jesus' response to the anxious circumstances of his time was unique. He never denied the possibility of terrible things happening. In fact, he predicted the destruction of the Temple and the sack of Jerusalem. But he never tried to channel that anxiety into some kind of self-serving end. He wasn't campaigning for political influence or

trying to get money. Instead, he typically called people to surrender their anxieties to a loving God who was in control and had already secured the most important things for them.

We should be able to realistically acknowledge and talk about the problems facing us. But realism doesn't just point us to pessimism. It is realistic to always keep in mind that the people who cry “doom” the loudest are often benefiting from it. They are generating engagement, growing their viewership, and probably trying to sell something too. And that motivation should have a bearing on how well we trust them. It's also realistic to see the world as Jesus did. The world is fallen. Terrible things can happen. But there is a loving God steering the course of history.

Pay attention to who is offering you fear and who is bolstering hope. Remember that there is a whole group of people who directly benefit from making you see the world as dark as possible. And finally, refuse to be taken in. Turn off the “doomers” and surrender your anxieties to God. Intentionally look for moments of goodness and provision and offer up thanksgiving to God for it. That's the only way we will escape the cycle of doom and live into the peace and contentment God offers us.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Brett D. Hoover

“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”

– Matthew 6:27

Dig Deeper into Your Faith

Want to dig deeper into your faith and the Bible? Then join the Digging Deeper study group that meets at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday in-person in the Memorial Family Room and online via Zoom. Let the office know if you want the Zoom link.

Presbytery Newsletter Available

If you would like to receive by email the weekly electronic newsletter of Huntingdon Presbytery, please email SusanPresbytery@gmail.com or call the presbytery at 814-682-7289 extension 0.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Pastoral Care Available: Pastor Brett Hoover is available in the church office Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for pastoral care and calls. If you need pastoral care, please call the office at 814-643-1302 or you may email the church office at huntpc1789@gmail.com. In case of emergency, please call Pastor Brett at 724-331-5798.

Thanks for Musical Help: Thanks to church musician Ivan Yumagulov, organist Keith Sutton, pianist Xiang Su and the Wopsononock Winds for sharing their musical talent on recent Sundays.

Open House at Camp: Krislund Camp and Retreat Center will hold its annual Open House Family Day from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, **May 16**. There will be hayrides, free food at cookouts, music, a giant swing and ziplines. Krislund is near Madisonburg in rural Centre County.

June Happenings: Save the date for the annual church picnic at Portstown Park on Sunday, **June 14**. Details from the Mission and Outreach Committee will appear in next month's newsletter. Meanwhile, the deacons' annual Strawberry Social will be held following worship on **June 7**.

Liturgists Needed: If you are interested in sharing your gifts in Sunday worship as a liturgist, please contact the church office or add your name to the list on the Information Station located at the back of the sanctuary.

Contributing Flowers for Worship: If you would like to contribute flower arrangements – either fresh or artificial – for the Sunday worship service, please contact the church office. The office phone is 814-643-1302.

Funeral Policy Available: Copies of HPC's policy for conducting Christian Services in Witness to the Resurrection (funerals) are available in the office.



Photo by Bill Caufield

Church musician Ivan Yumagulov accompanies the choir at the April 19 service.

Church Musician Plans Farewell Piano Concert

Church musician Ivan Yumagulov will give a farewell piano concert at 1 p.m. on Sunday, **May 3**, in the sanctuary. The concert will be preceded by a light buffet after the Sunday worship service.

Ivan, a graduate student at Penn State University in State College, has been HPC's church musician for the past two years. He played the piano for hymns and solo selections at Sunday services, and on April 19 led a performance by the church choir of "The Old Rugged Cross."

He will graduate from Penn State in May with a doctorate in musical arts and is planning to relocate to Indianapolis with his wife.



Photo by Bill Caufield

Musical Guests: The Wopsononock Winds play at the Palm Sunday service on March 29.

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Worship with us this Sunday in-person or on our Facebook page. Everyone is welcome!