

Clock Tower Tidings



Huntingdon Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

March 2023

PASTOR'S CORNER

For Lent, Let's Think About What We Desire

A few years ago, billionaire Warren Buffet offered a \$1 billion prize for a perfect NCAA Men's Basketball bracket. For those of you who might not be familiar, filling out a bracket is the way people predict the outcome of the championship tournament. But it's not just about picking the final winner. That would be too easy. To win the prize, someone had to correctly predict the outcome of every game through every level of the tournament.

Curious about the riskiness of Mr. Buffet's wager, I looked up the odds of filling out a perfect bracket. It's 1 in 9.2 quintillion. Just for some reference, the odds of winning the Powerball lottery jackpot are just under 1 in 300 million. Did this stop people from trying? Absolutely not!

I must confess that, like many other people, I've wondered what I would do if I suddenly came into that kind of wealth. There have been a few studies on the long-term effects of suddenly coming into a large windfall of money. Interestingly, most of our assumptions are wrong. Most winners don't squander or spend away their new wealth in a few years. And a sudden influx in cash doesn't actually impact happiness all that much. This harmonizes with other studies suggesting that wealth only affects happiness to a limited degree. After we meet our obligations with enough to secure our needs,

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Feedback Modifies Plans for Sanctuary

Renovation plans for the sanctuary have been modified by the Sanctuary Renovation Task Force after it received feedback from the members of the congregation.

The task force has dropped plans for a handicapped-accessible restroom in the back of the sanctuary and instead will explore options to upgrade existing restrooms. The group also decided not to pursue relocating the organ console and instead will open up space in front of the organ to address the needs of those with mobility issues. It also plans to make access

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Photo by Bill Caufield

A Magical Afternoon

About two dozen youngsters gathered in HPC's Fellowship Hall for a Hogwarts Party on January 28. More photos, Page 3.



Sunday Schedule

Worship is at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. The worship service is streamed live on Facebook and is archived for viewing on demand. Adult Sunday school is at 9:30 a.m. in the Memorial Family Room.

Dates to Remember

March 1,8,15,22,29 – PW Lenten Study – 10 a.m.
March 2,9,16,23,30 – Book Discussion – 7 p.m.
March 7 – Deacons – 7 p.m.
March 9 – Hometown Hearts community meal
March 12 – Daylight Saving Time returns
March 12 – Session – 6:30 p.m.
March 19 – Deacons' coffee fellowship time
April 2 – Palm Sunday

Food Pantry Donations

The Huntingdon Food Pantry is requesting **kidney beans** for March. Donations can be dropped off at the office or at the worship service on **March 26**.

Worship Attendance

The average in-person worship attendance for four Sundays in January and February was 36. Services had an average of 89 Facebook views.

Weekly Giving

Tithes and offerings for January totaled \$20,986, or an average of \$4,197 a week. Primary fund giving for 2023 is budgeted at \$200,000, or an average of \$3,846 a week.

Per Capita Contributions

The per capita for 2023 is \$39.24 per member, or \$5,768. As of mid-February, contributions totaled \$1,109.01.

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline is **Wednesday, March 15**.

Care & Visitation List

Vin Dandrea, Jeanne Speck, Margy Wilson

If you know anyone who would like to be put on this list, please call the church office at 814-643-1302.

Sanctuary

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to the organ pit easier.

Pastor Brett noted the changes in an update he gave the congregation at the annual meeting on January 29. He said the architect was preparing a new set of sketches to reflect the changes. The task force was planning to send a letter to the congregation updating the status of the renovations and explaining the changes.

The renovation plans still provide a climate-controlled environment for the sanctuary and a new carpet with more space between the pews.

The task force emphasized that the renovation is not intended to change the character of the historic 150-year-old sanctuary, but will make the space more comfortable, accessible and welcoming.

The sanctuary's last renovation was some 60 years ago.

The task force was formed in early 2020, but its work was delayed by the pandemic. It has been meeting since 2021 and last year solicited input from the congregation. The session approved in October the first of the committee's requests, to replace outside doors. The session also approved formation of a committee to conduct a capital campaign to help pay for the renovations. More on that committee will be shared when available.

Members of the task force are: Judy Post (chair), Artamarie Barclay, Rick Bayer, Max Byers, Mickie Byers, Pastor Brett Hoover, Annette Lloyd, Bob Lloyd, Marci Muir, Anita Nwaobilo, Paul Post and Nan Stewart.

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Please Pay 2023 Per Capita

If you are able, please pay your \$39.24 per capita assessment for 2023. HPC's total per capita assessment for 2023 is almost \$5,800. The per capita assessment provides most of the funding for the work of the presbytery, synod and General Assembly.



Photos by Bill Caufield



Activities included a wand-making class conducted by Mickie Byers (top), broomstick flying lessons with Kathy Criswell and Artamarie Barclay (below), and a potion tutorial with Pastor Brett (bottom).

Harry Potter Comes to HPC

Fellowship Hall and other parts of HPC were transformed into Hogwarts School for a Harry Potter-themed afternoon of fun and snacks for about two dozen youngsters on January 28.

Pastor Brett and Mickie Byers, above, placed the talking Sorting Hat on each youngster to



determine activity groups.

Some of the youngsters came dressed as favorite Hogwarts School characters, including a Harry Potter look-alike being checked in by Sylvia Byers at left.



HPC Compiles Annual Statistical Report

As of the end of 2022, HPC had 142 members, five fewer than in 2021, according to the annual Church Statistical Report.

The report, prepared for the PC(USA) by Clerk of Session Artamarie Barclay, shows the membership comprised 80 woman and 62 men. The congregation lost six members through death in 2022 and gained one new member through baptism, for a net loss of five.

The age distribution of members reflects the reality of an aging membership. There were nearly twice as many members over the age of 70 as there were under the age of 41 – 58 versus 30. There were 54 members between the ages of 41 and 70. In addition to members, the report noted there were 11 youth in the congregation and 10 friends of the congregation.

The report said HPC's average weekly worship attendance in 2022 was 68, which includes both in-person and online worshipers.

The 2022 Church Statistical Report includes both demographic and financial data. It was part of the packet of annual reports distributed at the annual meeting on January 29.



Photo by Bill Caufield

Session Clerk Artamarie Barclay at the January 29 annual congregational meeting.



Photo by Kathy Criswell

Potato flour covered Jack Van Natta when a bag burst at the Hometown Hearts meal he was helping to prepare in January.

Help HPC with March 9 Hometown Hearts Meal

This congregation is next scheduled to prepare and serve the weekly Hometown Hearts meal on Thursday, **March 9**. Please consider either volunteering to be part of the kitchen crew or to provide a dessert. If you are able to work in the kitchen or contribute a dessert, please let Artamarie Barclay know at 814-599-0872.

Kitchen crew volunteers are especially needed at this time of year since some regular members of the crew are not available.

HPC's turn to prepare the community meal occurs about every eight weeks. If you are interested in learning more about volunteering to be part of this important community outreach program, please contact Artamarie Barclay or the church office. The meals are currently prepared and distributed at St. James Lutheran Church.

Lenten Insights

PW Offers Bible Study Wednesday Mornings

It's not too late to participate in Presbyterian Women's annual Lenten Bible Study. This year's Bible study began on Ash Wednesday and will continue at 10 a.m. each Wednesday through Holy Week in the Memorial Family Room.

The 2023 Lenten Bible study is titled *Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight* by Carol M. Bechtel. Anita Nwaobilo returns as study-discussion leader.

The nine lessons of this Bible study consider Sabbath as a celebration, not a day of dreary formality; as a time to surrender unhealthy striving and frantic busyness; as a reminder that life is precious and working too much is against God's plans for our precious lives; and as a day devoted to community and justice and not exclusively to self-care.

Those interested in the study can contact Sue Lang at suelang2009@comcast.net. Study books are still available at \$10 each.

A reminder: PW's monthly book club will not be meeting during Lent.

PIPE DREAM

Gifts Will Aid Pantry Move

Presbyterian Women's Pipe Dream Project for the first quarter (through March) is the Huntingdon Area Food Pantry, which still needs funds for remodeling its new home at Seventh and Penn streets. Construction materials and labor costs have increased dramatically since the Pantry purchased the former service station. So, let us help the Food Pantry with its move. Remember, God loves a cheerful giver!



Pastor Leads Discussion Thursday Evenings

An evening Lenten discussion group led by Pastor Brett starts Thursday, **March 2**, using *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Few fictional works have had the level of cultural impact as the Harry Potter franchise. It has largely shaped the imagination of an entire generation.

The discussion will focus on some major themes: Why has this story had such a powerful impact? What cultural longings and desires are spoken to in this story? What are the explicit and latent Christian and non-Christian themes? How can understanding this story help us engage with younger generations?

The group will meet at 7 p.m. every Thursday from **March 2** until **March 30** in the Memorial Family Room. You can also join us by Zoom; just be sure to let the office know that you would like to receive the meeting link. Please secure your own copy of the book and feel free to read as many of the books in the series as you like.



Krislund to Celebrate 60 Years of Camping

In 2023, Krislund Camp and Retreat Center is marking 60 years of ministry in Central Pennsylvania. To commemorate this milestone, Krislund will be holding an anniversary celebration on Saturday, **August 19**.

The event will include open-adventure activities a silent and live auction, live music from Krislund musicians and plenty of food and fun for the entire family. Follow Krislund's Facebook page for updates. Krislund in rural Centre County is a joint venture of Huntingdon and two other presbyteries.

Pastor's Corner

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more money doesn't make us happier. Yet even knowing that probably won't stop us from dreaming. What could we do with \$1 billion?

These sorts of questions can actually connect powerfully with the season of Lent. Most of us think of Lent in a few limited ways. For some, it's a buildup to Easter. In this sense, Lent is similar to Advent building up to Christmas. While not wrong chronologically, this approach will make us miss the reflections and spiritual formation uniquely offered in Lent.

Another limited view of Lent sees it as only about external practices. Most of us have this tendency to associate Lent with fasting. And that fasting is usually tied to foods. We give up some simple pleasure like chocolate or anything with caffeine. We might even adjust behaviors like limiting screen time or, from my own experience, giving up a video game. Fasting is certainly an important spiritual practice. Jesus assumes his followers will fast regularly. And fasting is a great way to refocus on the God who gives us the things we enjoy instead of being distracted or dependent on those things.

But what if we add another dimension to Lent? Instead focusing on external practices and habits, what if we examined our very desires? What do we want? What do we long for? What do we think will give us contentment and peace or the good life? Do we long for that \$1 billion prize? Maybe we have in mind some kind of idealized family life. Or maybe it's simply physical health. What do we desire?

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul talks about making every thought obedient to Christ. In broader context, Paul is making a connection between the thoughts we dwell on and our spiritual condition. This makes all the sense in the world. Whatever occupies our mind and imagination will impact our spirit. In a sense, Paul is warning us to think about what we think about.

Lent is a perfect season for this kind of reflection and examination. Our actions aren't the only thing that should be brought into alignment with God.

Our desires and thoughts should be brought into alignment as well. We can do that by catching ourselves in contemplation and asking if Christ is honored by our reflection or imagination. And when we know we're falling short, we can pray for God to redirect our minds.

Jesus was adamant that real spiritual transformation encompassed our actions and our motivations. The heart, mind and soul are the origin of what the body does. This Lent, let's strive to build mental discipline just as much as we strive to practice physical restraint.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Brett D. Hoover

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

– 2 Corinthians 10:5



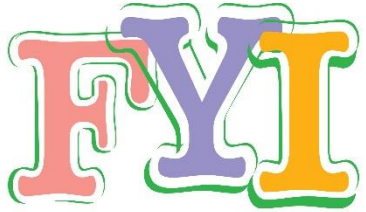
Krislund Seeks Volunteers

For over a decade, Thursday Volunteers have been an important part of Krislund Camp and Retreat Center in eastern Centre County. Volunteers meet every Thursday at 8 a.m. to work on both inside and outside projects, depending on the needs of the camp and the weather.

If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to either Josh Boyd at campdirector@krislund.org or Kealy Daye at programdirector@krislund.org to be included on the mailing list.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

February's session meeting was rescheduled to February 19. Highlights of that meeting will appear in April's newsletter.



• 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.

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Stay Connected on Facebook Page

Stay informed about what's happening at HPC by regularly viewing the church's Facebook page. The 10:30 a.m. Sunday service is streamed live and then archived for later viewing.

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Mapleton Church Closes

The Huntingdon Presbytery has established an administrative commission to dispose of the property of the 160-year-old Mapleton Presbyterian Church, which closed late last year because of declining membership. According to *The Daily News*, Mapleton officials are possibly interested in using the red brick church building for offices and a community hall.

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African American Presbyterians

The Presbyterian Historical Society kicked off 2023 by introducing a new blog series that features African American Presbyterians throughout the denomination's history. The series, "African American Leaders," will be published the first week of each month on the PHS website, history.pcusa.org.

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Prayer Chain Requests

Prayer chain requests may be made by contacting Deb Hetrick at 814-643-5424 (home) or 814-644-1653 (cell). All prayer chain requests will be kept confidential.



Photo by Bill Caufield

Fellowship Time

*Deacon Sue Dodson visits with Alice Heine at the deacons' February fellowship coffee, which featured Valentine-themed snacks. Another coffee is planned for Sunday, **March 19**.*

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Spring Forward on March 12

Daylight Saving Time resumes on Sunday, **March 12**. Be sure to set your clock ahead one hour, or you'll be late for church!

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Contributing Flowers for Worship

If you would like to contribute flower arrangements for the Sunday worship service, please contact the church office.

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Sunday Liturgists Needed

If you are interested in sharing your gifts in Sunday worship as a liturgist, please contact Amanda Hetrick or the church office.

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Tax-Free IRA Contributions

Members and friends who must take required minimum distributions from an Individual Retirement Account in 2023 are reminded that they can avoid paying federal income taxes on proceeds donated directly to the church by the custodian of their account. If you are interested in this option, known as a qualified charitable distribution, it is suggested that you consult with your tax advisor before taking your next required minimum IRA distributions.

Huntingdon Presbyterian Church

508 Mifflin Street

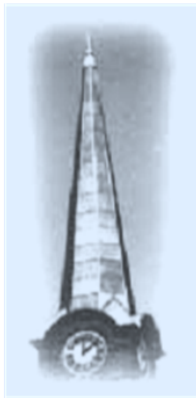
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Address Service Requested



**March
2023**



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**Huntingdon Presbyterian Church
Serving God and Community Since 1789**

*“Our mission is to share God’s word
and the Good News that Jesus loves us.”*



Daylight Saving Time Resumes March 12

Stay in Touch with HPC’s Facebook Page