

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

November 2025

PASTOR'S CORNER

Don't Lose Sight Of Work's Real Purpose

I saw a headline the other day that made my heart skip a beat: "Olive Garden to Close All Its Restaurants." Terrified that yet another cherished experience from the past would disappear, I clicked on the headline to see what was happening. It turns out that I had fallen victim to internet headline sensationalism known as "clickbait." After reading a few sentences, it was clear that Olive Garden was not disappearing forever. The article was merely reporting on the company's decision to close all its locations for Thanksgiving and Christmas Day! (I apologize if I scared you Olive Garden fans, but now you can breathe your collective sigh of relief.)

After my anger at being toyed with subsided, I grew puzzled. It had never occurred to me that Olive Garden would be open on Thanksgiving and Christmas. I just assumed it wouldn't be. If there are any days when the American consumer could forgo their desire for chicken parmigiana and breadsticks and allow all the folks who prepare and serve them to rest with their families, surely it would be Thanksgiving and Christmas!

There are certainly a host of occupations that
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Election of Officers Scheduled for Nov. 30

A special congregational meeting has been called following the Sunday worship service on **November 30** to elect church officers for 2026.

A slate of elders, deacons and other officers will be presented by the Nominating Committee. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor. Elders and deacons elected for three-year terms will comprise the Class of 2028.

The Nominating Committee is co-chaired by Elders Betsy Mason and Ann Dunlavy.



Photo by Bill Caufield

Raising Voices in Song: The Rev. Ela J. Robertson leads the HPC congregation in a Prayer Song at the start of the worship service on September 27. Another photo, Page 4.

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 on Zoom.

Dates to Remember

November 2 – Daylight Saving Time ends
November 4 – Deacons – 7 p.m.; Election Day
November 5 – PW Book Club – 10 a.m.
November 6 – Hometown Hearts meal
November 11 – Veterans Day
November 14 – Game Night – 7 p.m.
November 16 – Session – 6:30 p.m.
November 22 – Salvation Army bell-ringing
November 23 – Hanging of the Greens
November 27-28 – Thanksgiving; office closed
November 30 – First Sunday in Advent

Food Pantry Donations

The Huntingdon Food Pantry is requesting **hand soap** for November. 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 September and October was 44. Services had an average of 70 live and archived Facebook views.

Weekly Giving

Tithes and offerings through September totaled \$135,537.51, or an average of \$3,475 a week. Primary Fund giving for 2025 is budgeted at \$195,000, or an average of \$3,750 a week.

Per Capita Contributions

The 2025 per capita is \$41 per member, for a total assessment of \$5,535. As of October 1, per capita contributions totaled \$1,480.

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the December newsletter is Saturday, **November 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.

Hometown Hearts Shift Scheduled for Nov. 6

Volunteers from HPC are scheduled to serve the Hometown Hearts weekly community meal on the first Thursday of the month, **November 6**. This is a change from HPC's usual shift on second Thursdays of the month, and is the last HPC shift scheduled for 2025.

HPC team members have a great time in fellowship, and can always use new volunteers. Each team of workers includes a prep crew and a servers/cleanup crew. To join the team, please call Artamarie Barclay at 814-599-0872, or Sylvia in the church office. If you can provide a dessert, please notify Jane Brown.

Hometown Hearts serves a free takeout meal each Thursday at St. James Lutheran Church. In recent months, more than 200 meals were distributed each week.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The session approved the following during its monthly meeting on October 19 held in person and via Zoom:

- Stripping and rewaxing of the basement kitchen floor by Carpet One
- Community "Festival of Song" on December 13 in the HPC sanctuary; Sylvia Byers will coordinate
- A special called congregational meeting on November 30 for the election of officers
- An additional \$250 donation to Huntingdon Regional Fire and Rescue – a total of \$500 for the year
- Continued current use of monitors in the sanctuary and streaming online, with possible expanded use

Prayer Walk Postponed

The Prayer Walk from Flag Pole Hill to the Peace Chapel has been postponed indefinitely. Forecasts of inclement weather forced the cancellation of the walk on October 12 and on the makeup date of October 19.

PW Again Raises Funds For Huntingdon House

For many years, Presbyterian Women has supported Huntingdon House, our community's domestic abuse shelter, through the Angel Tree Project. Due to the pandemic, Huntingdon House changed its donation format from needed clothes and toys to a monetary one, which still continues.

Barbara Williams and Heather Beckwith, a strong mother-daughter duo, are PW's co-chairs of this endeavor, which runs for only three weeks. This timeline gives the Huntingdon House staff time to purchase and distribute gift cards to those under its care and protection, allowing these residents to purchase specific holiday needs for them and their children.

The 2025 Angel Tree Project begins Sunday, **November 16**, and concludes Sunday, **December 7**, which gives three full weeks for monetary donations.

If donating cash, please put it in an envelope marked “Presbyterian Women – Angel Tree” and drop it in an offering plate.

If giving by check, please make the check out to Presbyterian Women with Angel Tree in the memo line and drop it in an offering plate. Financial Secretary Sharon Caufield will pass along these donations to Presbyterian Women, which will write one check to Huntingdon House. As in the past, any donations arriving late will be given to Huntingdon House via a second check from Presbyterian Women.

HPC's church family has given generously over the years to Huntingdon House through the Angel Tree Project. The members of Presbyterian Women are praying that many of you will remember victims of domestic abuse in our town and county through monetary gifts of any amount during this holiday season.

Happy Thanksgiving! Merry Christmas!



Facebook Images

Medical Mission: Jenny Brockett reported to the congregation October 5 on her recent medical mission trip to Ghana in west Africa. A number of medical specialties were represented, and an estimated 10,000 people registered for services. She also set up a slide show on her trip in the rear of the sanctuary, below.



Set Clocks Back One Hour

Daylight Saving Time ends and Standard Time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, **November 2**. “Spring ahead, fall back” – set your clocks back an hour.

Festival of Song to Return

The Festival of Song will return to HPC at 7 p.m. on Saturday, **December 13**. HPC Secretary Sylvia Byers has volunteered to organize the community Christmas concert, including recruiting performers. The festival had been a holiday fixture before the pandemic. Concert details will appear in December's newsletter.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Pipe Dream Needs Your Coins for Backpack Program

Hey – what's that noise? Clink, clink, clink! Reindeer bells? Sleigh bells? School bells? No, it's the sound of quarters being dropped in the pipes for the Standing Stone Elementary School Backpack Program!

Each weekend, Standing Stone Care Team volunteers organize this vital local program for eligible students. During this holiday season, please remember the backpack program. All donations are welcome; if giving by check, please make it out to Presbyterian Women and drop it in an offering plate.

Money given to the PW Pipe Dream project through December benefits the Standing Stone backpack program.

The Pipe Dream for July, August and September raised \$283.16 for the Bags of Love. PW is grateful to our church family for its ongoing support of all the Pipe Dreams. Thank you.

PW NOTES

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. The Prayer Chain is an integral part of what women of faith do.

Monthly Meeting: Presbyterian Women's next meeting is Monday, **November 3**, at 1 p.m. in the Memorial Family Room.

PW Book Club: Book discussions are held the first Wednesday of each month at 10 a.m. in the former choir room. Book Club does not meet during Lent.

Spead a Few Quiet Moments with a Book

Many of us try to find a few quiet moments during the busy holiday season -- those days that crowd the end of each calendar year. PW's Book Club looks for brief, holiday-themed books to lure us to find those precious moments of quiet.

November's selection is **Silent Night** by Mary Higgins Clark (1927-2020). New York City, a father's needed cancer operation, Christmas Eve, Rockefeller Center, the subway, and a 7-year-old boy. Oh, my, where will Clark (a Christmas Eve baby herself) lead the readers? Please join Book Club at 10 a.m. on **November 5** in the former choir room.

Closing out 2025 on Wednesday, **December 3** (at 10 a.m. in the former choir room) is the novel **A Quilt for Christmas** by Melody Clarkson. Newly widowed Vera moves to a new town and finds her Christmas spirit is practically non-existent. Making a quilt for an ailing neighbor pulls together an unusual group of quilters to create this gift on a short timeline. But more than a quilt is built – and the spirit and the beauty of Christmas finds them all. Happy Reading!



Photo by Bill Caufield

Musical Interlude: The Rev. Ela J. Robertson plays the cello during the worship service on September 27. She also led Prayer Songs at the start of the service. She is pastor of the East Kish and West Kish Presbyterian churches and is working on a music ministry in Huntingdon Presbytery.

Help Assemble Kits For Disaster Victims

Volunteers are needed at HPC to assemble Heart Kits at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, **November 20**. The kits, also known as hygiene kits, are distributed to those in need at times of disaster.

It's not too late to donate to this important mission project. The Mission and Outreach Committee is receiving monetary contributions through Sunday, **November 2**. Please write "Heart Kits" in your check's memo line or fill out a pew envelope noting "Heart Kits." Checks and envelopes can be placed in an offering plate.

The kits cost about \$15 each and contain personal items needed by survivors of disasters such as toothbrushes, soap, deodorants, combs and washcloths. Your donations enable the committee to purchase items in bulk for the kits.

Heart Kits are collected by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in collaboration with Church World Service.

Insurance Switched to Erie

The session's Property Committee reported that effective October 13 the church's fire and liability insurance has been switched to Erie Insurance. The policy covers the entire church, including its slate roof. The cost of the policy is a little less than what the church was paying to Brotherhood Mutual Insurance for a policy that did not include the roof.

Dig Deeper into Hebrews

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. The group is beginning a study of the New Testament's Letter to the Hebrews. Let the office know if you wish to attend the study by Zoom. A Zoom link will be sent each Sunday to your email address.



2024 File Photos

Brian Beckwith works on decorating the tree.

Hanging of the Greens Comes Early This Year

The first Sunday in Advent is in November and Thanksgiving is late in the month again this year, so the decoration of the sanctuary for Christmas will take place after the Sunday worship service on **November 23**. The annual event is usually held on a Saturday in early December.

The centerpiece of Hanging of the Greens is decorating the large Christmas tree in the front of the sanctuary with white Chrismons.

But there are also wreaths, greens, lights and aisle candle-holders to unpack and place.

Everyone is invited to stay after the Sunday worship service for a time of fun and fellowship and help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. Refreshments will be provided.



Candle holders are ready for placement in the sanctuary to mark Christmas 2024.

Pastor's Corner

Continued from Page One

might require folks to work on these festive days. We should, indeed, be grateful for the first responders and all the people who show up when something breaks or goes wrong even on days when the rest of us get to rest. But I don't believe Italian food rises to that level of absolute necessity. This headline about Olive Garden shouldn't have been news at all.

In classic Pastor Brett fashion, I started to overthink all this. What does it say about our moment in history that not working on the most significant holidays of the year is news? I thought immediately about some debates I've heard recently concerning whether or not modern workers work more than medieval peasants. Yes, there is a debate about this. And believe it or not, modern people work far more days in a year than medieval peasants. Though it should absolutely be noted that most modern work isn't nearly as labor intensive. An "apples-to-apples" comparison here is not possible for a variety of reasons. But the comparison is still a little jarring. A modern employer will make greater claims than a feudal lord on their employee's time.

How did we get to this place? Are we so captured by the lure of consumption that we demand others serve us Italian food on the most important holidays? Are we so wedded to materialism that earning and producing are not allowed to be halted for even a day? Have we created economic conditions so desperate that folks are not only willing to work on these special days but afraid to take off lest they fall behind or get let go?

As is most often the case, the real problem behind these problems is that we often lose sight of the real purpose of things. Work and material prosperity are good things. But they are not the proper, final goal. They are a means to achieve a higher end. A careful reading of Genesis will show us that we were created for work. But the purpose of that work was to help God order creation for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

Throughout Scripture, material prosperity was seen as a sign of divine blessing. But it was always accompanied with an obligation to use that blessing for the benefit of others.

As long as we neglect the higher spiritual aims and pursue only the material things that support them, life will feel disordered and we'll end up missing out on both. Walt Disney once said something that touches on this truth. When talking about the purpose of his company, he said, "We don't tell stories in order to make money. We make money in order to tell stories."

This year I'm especially thankful for all the things I can't possibly attain with a check. I'm thankful for the love and companionship of friends and family. I'm thankful for the peace, contentment, joy, meaning and hope of my faith. I'm thankful for the love and grace of God given freely to me in Jesus Christ. These are the blessings life was made for. These are the blessings that will endure throughout eternity.

As we gather around our tables on Thanksgiving, it is good, right and even our duty to thank God for the material blessings and abundance we enjoy. But let us never forget to give thanks for all the higher blessings those things serve.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Brett D. Hoover

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

– Luke 12:15

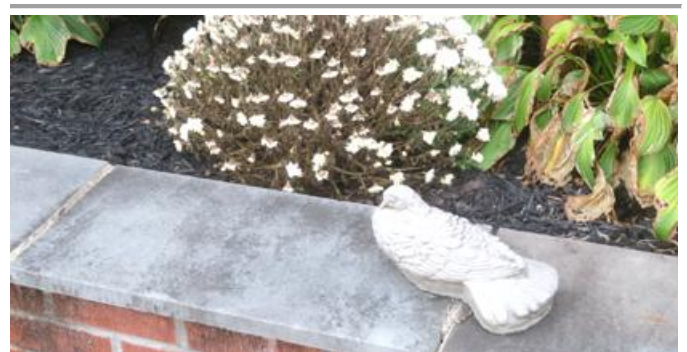


Photo by Bill Caufield

Snowbird? A concrete dove has taken up residence in front of the HPC signboard. No word on whether the bird is going South for the winter.

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.

Liturgists Still 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 at the back of the sanctuary. Thanks to Judy Post for volunteering to serve as liturgist in October.

Presbytery Meeting: Huntingdon Presbytery will hold its final stated meeting of 2025 at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, **November 11**, at the Bedford Presbyterian Church. The worship leader will be the Rev. Jack Miller and the offering will go to the Presbytery Hunger Fund.

Guest Preacher: Elder Ken Lynch of Altoona, a certified lay preacher, will be filling the pulpit on Sunday, **November 9**, in the absence of Pastor Brett Hoover, who will be on vacation.

Next Communion: The sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be served during the Sunday worship service on **November 30**.

Game Night: The next Game Night will be at 7 p.m., Friday, **November 14**, in the Memorial Family Room. Feel free to bring your own board games, or use the board games that are provided. Everyone is welcome.

New Date for Trunk or Treat: HPC's Trunk or Treat night was changed to October 29 to correspond with the borough's revised date for trick or treat night. The borough rescheduled trick or treat night because of an Huntingdon Area High School football playoff game on Halloween, October 31.



Photo by Bill Caufield

Holy Smoker: Tyler Williams of Bedford explains the fine points of preparing pulled pork during a demonstration at the first Holy Smokes class on September 27. The session was moved from the parking lot to the Memorial Family Room due to rain.

FROM THE DEACONS

The Board of Deacons met Tuesday, October 7. These are some highlights from our monthly meeting:

- We will be working with Mission and Outreach Committee to complete a fall Presbyterian mission project. With assistance from the congregation, we will be creating Presbyterian Disaster Heart Kits. More information will be forthcoming.
- A date of Saturday, **November 22**, was set for a Presbyterian Day of bell-ringing for the Salvation Army at Ace Hardware in Smithfield. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the Information Station board in the sanctuary.
- Sunday, **December 14**, will be the date for our traditional cookie share/social following worship. Watch for more information in the bulletin.

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.

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NOVEMBER 2025



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