



REDSTONE RECORD

PRESBYTERY OF REDSTONE



Communicate the Word...Carry on the Work...Change the World Together

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Learning to Serve

The Lessons of Hunger Ministry and Mission



Volunteer Fred Burk checks the shelves of the food pantry at First Presbyterian Church, Irwin.

When Myron Elder found a check for fifty dollars slipped under the door of the food pantry at **First Presbyterian Church in Irwin**, he was delighted but not surprised. Many of the people who use the pantry are thankful for the food they are able to get, and some of them give back whenever things start looking up in their lives.

Irwin, First runs the food pantry with donations from members of the church, local schools and businesses like Bell View Foods of Penn. Their criteria for serving someone in need has been reduced to three words, "I need help." If someone says they need help, they can get it at the Irwin, First food pantry. Because they are an independent pantry without government funding, they don't have as many regulations as some others. They take an approach that Elder calls "closed-eyed Christianity."

"When I say closed eyed it doesn't mean you stumble around," Elder explains. "It means you don't second guess what this person in need is doing or why. You trust that God knows whether they need it or not."

"Closed eyed means not questioning the new manicure or

the car they arrive in," adds Fred Burk, an Irwin, First volunteer. "We say our food pantry is for the needy not the greedy. Most people respect that and only come when they need to."

"It's easy to question what other people have," agrees Carolyn Mosser, a regular volunteer at the food pantry at **East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Vanderbilt**. "You just close your eyes and do your business."

The food pantry at East Liberty serves about a hundred people a month and is a community-wide effort. The volunteers there listen to the needs of the people, sometimes helping them with things other than food, including medical needs. Mosser says the key is to listen.

"There are so many stories. You need to listen and extend your ear and offer a word of encouragement and help when you can," she says.

"Our idea of the poor or needy changes once we start encountering them regularly," says The Reverend Martin Ankrum of **First Presbyterian Church, Greensburg**.

Greensburg, First hosts a Second Sunday Supper. Each month about one hundred people from the surrounding community attend the event.

"We aren't going to save anyone truly hungry with a dinner once a month," says Leigh Bach, a Greensburg, First volunteer. "We are there to serve and feed people's spirit."

She says it's an opportunity to eat with people they might not sit down with otherwise.

"We don't worry whether or not the person attending the dinner has a thousand dollars under their mattress. If they are here they must be in some kind of need," she explains. "We've discovered that as volunteers we get as much out of the experience as the people we are supposed to be serving."

How We Serve: Hunger Programs of Redstone Churches

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. —Mark 10:45



Hunger Facts:

- 15,000 individuals in Westmoreland County alone receive help from the Westmoreland County Food Bank
- Nationally 36 % of households served by food banks include children under the age of 18.
- 34.5% of food support clients report at least some income from employment.
- 61% of households in Westmoreland County report monthly income of less than \$1400.
- 64% of households have incomes below the Federal Poverty Level

Sources: Westmoreland County Food Bank and America's Second Harvest

Many churches in Redstone Presbytery work to address the hunger needs. Here are just a few of the programs in place:

Middle School students at **Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church, Murrysville** participated in a week-long hunger retreat, that included a scavenger hunt at a local supermarket, serving food to those in need and volunteering at the Westmoreland County Food Bank. Erica Gausa, a freshman at Penn Trafford was surprised to learn there were so many hungry people in western Pennsylvania.

“We learned that there are different kinds of hunger, not just the physical pain of being hungry but there’s a spiritual hunger, too. We need to help people with both of these kinds of hunger,” she says.

Pleasant View Presbyterian Church, Smock, holds a personal goods and services auction and donates some of the money to the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Auctioned items range from sports tickets to dinners hosted in various homes. A weekend stay at a Seven Springs Condo, rent-a-grandma for a day, babysitting, a sermon on the topic of the buyer’s choice, a load of cow manure (some years the load of cow power sells for more than the sermon!) have also been auctioned off. The Auction generates about \$3,000, half of which goes to the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

Delmont Presbyterian Church is one of many churches in Redstone who participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring held on Super Bowl Sunday. In 2006, DPC collected 22 boxes of food in grocery carts at the church, sponsored a homemade soup sale and solicited for food and cash donations at the Delmont Wal-Mart. These efforts netted a donation of over \$1700 to the Westmoreland County Food Bank. This not only gave the community the opportunity to help but also brought awareness to the hunger problem in our county through this national event.

The table setting isn’t complete at **First Presbyterian Church, Johnstown** if the little money boxes aren’t on hand. First, Johnstown participates in the two cents a meal program. Each time the table is set for an event like the men’s breakfast, circle groups or a church dinner, the boxes are put in the center of the table for donations. A hunger offering is also taken four times a year and the money is donated to the Presbyterian Hunger Fund.

When the women’s Bible study at **Latrobe Presbyterian Church** learned that the Westmoreland County Food Bank might not have enough Thanksgiving turkeys for their clients last year, the ladies got to work. They stamped pictures of turkeys onto plain white envelopes and placed them on the pews of the church as a way to raise money. The congregation donated about \$1500 to the turkey fund. The group went on to raise \$5000 during a special soup and salad luncheon and flea market and bazaar. That money was donated to fight hunger in the Latrobe area.

Photos: (top) Middle School Students from Newlonsburg prepare to serve food. (bottom) Mary Peroni unloads donated food for the Pleasant View Food Pantry.





Mary Ellen Lawson's retirement dinner was held at the Lakeview Lounge in August.

Honoring the Service of Mary Ellen Lawson

Presbyterians from across four counties, as well as several different States, gathered to honor the service of Mary Ellen Lawson on the occasion of her retirement after 22 years as the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Redstone. In what was a joyous occasion of fellowship and celebration, Mary Ellen was kindly roasted in true Presbyterian style—decently and in order *and* with multiple references to the *Book of Order*.

Come In Out of the Cold

Join other churches across Redstone Presbytery in welcoming people into the love of Jesus Christ this Christmas. *The Come In Out of the Cold* campaign offers congregations a step-by-step guide to making their church a warm and welcoming place for Christmas. But, the time to start planning is now! See www.redstone.org for more information.

Come to the Banquet

Ebensburg Church Celebrates People and Traditions

In our transitory world, longtime church membership may seem like a thing of the past, but **Ebensburg Presbyterian Church** makes a point of honoring its long-time members.

Each year, the Deacons organize the Silver and Gold Banquet to honor those who have been members of the church for over fifteen years. As part of the celebration they list their Golden Age members who have been members for over 50 years and their Silver to Gold members who have remained committed for 25 to 50 years. Currently twenty people have celebrated 50 years of membership and have one member still active after 78 years!

Some of the longtime members are no longer able to attend services regularly, but they come out for the event with their families and friends.

“They love their church. They miss their church and they pray for the church,” explains the Reverend James Farrer. “Caring is at the heart of this program. It lets people know that they are valuable and that we appreciate their contributions of the past and the prayers they say for the church while away.”

Rev. Farrer adds that it’s important for the young people of the church to see and hear what the church and faith have meant to the longtime members.

“It’s important to remember our traditions and share a history of our church and our faith with others,” he says.



Eva Tomb received her Golden Award this year.

Past, Present and Future @ Redstone

Notes from the July meeting of the Redstone Presbytery

Redstone Comings and Goings

Redstone Welcomes Robert Smith as the New Stated Clerk!



Born in Harrisburg in 1963, he is the son of a Presbyterian minister. He grew up in the Pittsburgh area and graduated from Baldwin High School in 1981. He went on to pursue aviation and graduated from the Community College of Beaver County with degrees in Professional Piloting and Air Traffic Control.

He has been extremely active within the Presbyterian Church and has served on numerous committees while at Baldwin Presbyterian Church. He is an ordained Deacon and

Elder and for the past 13 years has served Pittsburgh Presbytery as its Associate Stated Clerk.

He and his wife Holli have been married for 20 years and have three children, Jennifer, Amanda, and Abigail.

Other News around Redstone

Redstone also welcomes to **Helen Kester** new pastor of Derry Presbyterian Church; **Chris Enoch**, new pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church, Uniontown (Installation, September 24 at 4:00 p.m.) and **Doug Stevens**, new pastor of the Westmont Presbyterian Church, Johnstown (Installation, October 1, at 4:00 p.m.)...**Robert Thokar** was re-authorized to serve as lay preacher for First Presbyterian, Ebensburg,...Extended the contract between **Reverend Bobbie Hineline** and Middle Presbyterian Church, Mt. Pleasant...Approved contract between **Rick Watson**, CLP and Leisenring Presbyterian Church

Business and Money Matters

Presbytery voted to approve the 2007 Unified Budget of Operations and Benevolence to support the mission, ministry, and maintenance of Redstone.

Mark Your Calendar!

- **October 9-11** Wee Kirk Conference at Laurelville Conference Center.
- **October 14** Authorized Lay Preacher (ALP) and Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) continuing education retreat with Dr. William Carl, III at Maplewood Presbyterian Church.
- **October 19-20** Synod of the Trinity meeting, Radisson Inn, West Middlesex, PA.
- **October 23** Joint Presbytery Council Retreat -- the current Presbytery Council and the newly elected Presbytery Council prepare for our future under the new Mission Design.
- **November 4** Ethics training for all who serve churches (pastors, pulpit supplies, ALPs, CLPs, DCEs and youth leaders..
- **November 21** 9:30 a.m. Redstone Presbytery meeting at the Congruity Presbyterian Church.



Details online at www.redstone.org

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We want to hear from YOU...

Is your church doing something special for Christmas or in the New Year? If so, we'd love to hear from you. To share your church's news and ideas for the **Redstone Record**, please email secretary@redstone.org.