THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
617 Main Street
Irwin PA 15642
www.firstpresbyirwin.org

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NEWSLETTER
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Volume 60 No. 5

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. Douglas Rehberg ..... Minister x115
Rev. Sam Strohm ..... Ministry Associate
Daniel Miller ..... Office Manager x114
Gary Vamos ..... Bookkeeper x110
Ginny Pellis ..... Receptionist/Secretary x113
Heather Duckett ..... Children's Ministry Leader
. ..... Youth Ministry Leader
Judy Baker ..... Youth Choir Director
Diane Johnston ..... Bell Choir Director
Thomas Thornton ..... Sexton

From the time of his youth, Todd was a natural athlete. In college at Wharton, he was the captain of the basketball team. When he graduated in 1991, he began working for Wilson Sporting Goods in Chicago. But two years later, after earning an MBA from DePaul, he took a job with Oracle Corporation in New York City. He and his wife moved east. They settled in New Jersey where they taught Sunday School, worked with a Youth Ministry, and started a family. In early September, he and his wife were in Italy for a five-day trip. He had won as a top sales leader for Oracle. When they return to New York, it's 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Todd has a meeting in San Francisco the next day, but instead of jumping on a plane that night, he decides to wait until the morning to spend time with his wife and three little boys. So, at 6:15 in the morning, he leaves the house for the airport. Three hours later, over eastern Ohio, an announcement comes over the loudspeaker, "We have a bomb on board." All the passengers are herded to the back of the plane.

Under the curtain, between first class and coach, Todd can see the pilot and copilot lying on the floor with their throats slashed. So, he grabs one of the phones on the back of the seat and tries to place a credit card call to his wife, but he can't get through. Instead, the call is routed to the GTE airphone supervisor. His name is the same as his wife's, Lisa. And the FBI listens in as Todd tells her what's happening and that they have a plan. It's not an elegant plan. It's not the stuff of Alex Cross, or James Bond. It has two steps: jump the hijackers and fly the plane into the ground. And as he prepares to say goodbye, he asked Lisa and his fellow passengers to repeat with him the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm. And when they finish, he says to Lisa, "When this is all over, will you please call my family and tell them how much I love them?" Then he turns to his fellow compatriots and says, "Are you ready? Let's roll." Those are the last words ever heard from Flight 93; "Let's Roll." And within two minutes the plan is complete. Days later, Lisa Beamer is interviewed and asked how she's coping with the loss of her husband; and you know what she says? "It's as if God spent 33 years preparing Todd for that flight."

You know, the same could be said for Nehemiah. Hundreds of years before his birth, God had promised the prophet Jeremiah that He would send Israel into exile, and then bring them back to the Promised Land. It's a great story, and so is our story.

Nearly 10 years ago, Ron Durika came to the First Presbyterian Church of Irwin, fresh out of the construction business and seminary. He came here as the Associate Pastor with a raft of ministry responsibilities, but also a dream to equip this church for greater ministry in the future.

Drawing upon his experience in the building business, Ron began to draft building plans to replace the 100+ year old manse and newer Perry Addition, with a fully functional ministry building to complement our beautiful sanctuary building. Soon a plan was nucleated to move forward with the dream to build a new building for the glory of God and the benefit of Irwin.

On Thursday, March 16, more than 60 members of the church gathered for prayer and Thanksgiving to God for the combination of a decade long dream. Reverends Durika and Wakeman joined Sam and Doug to lead a 15-minute prayer time prior to Adam Kerber and Steve Guffy commencing their work.

It was a cold, crisp morning, but the love and grace of God warmed us all. What a joy it is to see what God had begun preparing us to do after 10 years, coming to fruition and be able to exclaim as Todd Beamer might, "Let's Roll!"

From The Pulpit

Sunday, April 2nd marks the completion of our 2-part series on the Book of Galatians. Beginning an September 4th, we began our study with 12-weeks of messages entitled, "The Rescue." Here Paul sets forth the clearest, most comprehensive examination of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the entire New Testament.

Following "The Rescue," we began looking at the second half of the letter under the title, "freedom." For 13 weeks we have examined the replication of the Gospel for every one of us.

For many it's been a lot to think about. For Christians Throughout the ages, it's been transformative. As Luther called it, the Book of Galatians is the Magna Charta of the Christian Faith, and it's hard not to whole-heartedly agree with him. Here in one letter sets forth the finished work of Christ, and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in every redeemed life. We hope that you have enjoyed the journey through Galatians, and grown from it, as we have.

Beginning on Maundy Thursday, April 6th and continuing through the balance of April, we will be looking at the power of the cross and the resurrection. Following upon these six messages, we will take a deep dive into the meaning of the cross with an examination of Jesus' seven statements from the cross. Often called, "the seven last words of Jesus" these words are fully packed with a depth of meaning that is often overlooked. We will endeavor to rectify that by examining each sentence, praise, and word uttered there by our Lord and Savior.

It can be well argued that the importance of these words can not be overstated or over examined:

"Father forgive them; for they know not what they do."

"Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

"Woman, behold your son! Behold your mother!"

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

"I thirst"

"It is Finished."

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

Progress report from the PNC:

Our work continues as we get ready to look for a new Called and Installed Pastor for our congregation. Since our formation as a committee, we read the book, The Red Sea Rules and met six times with Doug and Sam to discuss what we learned. It is a book on remembering to trust that God is in control; something we all need to remember as we go through this process. These discussions also enabled us to get to know each other better and get comfortable sharing our ideas and opinions.

In January we met with the Executive Presbyter. He brought us all kinds of information on the process before us and sat with us and answered our questions. Since that meeting, we chose Co-chairs, Phyllis Neral and Kim Minteer and a Secretary/Internet Communicator-Diane Johnston.

We are now collecting and analyzing data on our church's program, our membership profile, our community profile and our financial profile. This will be used to help us fill out our Mission Information Form which will eventually go to the Church Leadership Connection in Louisville. This will happen after it is approved by Session and the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery. Our timeline for this is to get it to the Session in May and to the Presbytery by June.

Please pray for our committee as we go through this process. Thank you.

Palm Sunday	**8:15 & 10:30am**
Maundy Thursday	**7:00pm**
Good Friday Service	**7:00pm**
Easter Sunday	**8:15 & 10:30am**

MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER – CE CONTRIBUTION

We have had **Family Sunday** for 2 months now and are planning to continue with that happening on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We LOVE seeing the kids in worship! We encourage all families to bring the kids to either worship service at any time, but especially on Family Sunday where the Youth Choir sings, and Gary Filson gives a kid's message with magic!

Jumpstart and Refresh have been going well. For the adults, Rev. Gary Filson led a discussion group on the book of Esther which ended this past Sunday. He is planning a new series on The Parables of Jesus beginning April 16. There is no reservation needed, all are welcome! The Jesus the King discussion, led by Barb Rehberg has been meeting at Snyder's Funeral Home and will continue through the end of May with a break for Palm and Easter Sundays. For the kids, it is Sunday School as usual for the 9:15am hour in between worship services. There will be no Jumpstart on Easter Sunday, but Gary will have a special kid's message during the 10:30am worship service for the kids, then we will have Family Sunday as planned on April 16th.

We have several **youth events** coming up for you to mark on your calendar. Informational flyers are posted around the church for each event as well as given out in Jumpstart or Youth Club. Be sure to call or email Heather Duckett if you are planning to attend. 724-863-5910 x116 or heather@firstpresby.org:

April 1 – Easter Egg Hunt at Diane Johnston's house

April 26 – Youth Club Bowling Outing at North Irwin VFD

May 7 – Confirmation Class Graduation Reception

May 21 – Graduation Breakfast in the Social Hall

June 4 - End of Year Jumpstart Picnic at Irwin Park

History Note: Let's begin with 1Corinthians 3:9-1 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. We said goodbye to our Manse/ Ofifce building on March 16, 2023, but we keep our memories of the time and fellowship that we spent there. We honor those, who with their resources and foresight built this manse for their needs and for the needs of future generations. On September 22, 1902, the parsonage lot was purchased from Thomas H. And Allie Irwin, and the manse was constructed under the supervision of a building committee consisting of C. A. Thompson, Dr. R. P. McClellan, Thomas Ray, George Sowash and J.C. Byerly. It was turned over to the church free of debt. It was not until September 4, 1915 that a contract was awarded for the construction of the church on Main Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. In 1979, the manse was converted into an office building and a housing allowance was provided for the pastor. In 1982, this building was expanded to include an entrance to the main church, create a chapel and meeting room, and provide 3 additional offices . This was made possible by a gift from Mr. Chauncey Perry in memory of Blanche Armstrong Perry and W. Perry. Mr. Perry also gave the church his residence on Pennsylvania Avenue which was used as a manse for the Associate Pastor until 1994. We now move forward creating new history for ourselves, our community and future generations as we proclaim the word of God and serve the people of the community.

Thursday, March 16th was a wonderful, positive day. A giant thank you to all who were able to join the watchful eyes as the old church manse kept tumbling down! For those who could not be there in person, I hope you see some of the many videos taken by fellow church members. There should be a posted video on our church website.

We officially began the day with prayer led by Reverends Rehberg, Wakeman, Durika, and Strohm. We then used a responsive prayer with individuals calling out a specific person, group, and/ or word or phrase, followed by the group response: Lord, hear our prayer. Example: for families, Lord hear our prayer, our church memories, Lord hear our prayer, for our church teams, for K. McVicker, Patrick Myers, and Dan Brentzel, along with today's demolition expert - Adam Kerber, Lord we thank you.

With at least 60 people watching from Main Street and some others in the alley behind the church, we had an excellent turnout. People were joyfully sharing past history of the church and how it is the time for new beginnings. People did what we can do best - spend time together - along with remembering to honor God.

This month's praise and thank you listing is built around the responsive prayer practice used Thursday morning March 16th by the many viewers waiting for the first crunch of the CAT demolition equipment to be put into action.
Using "Lord hear our prayer" as the response, here are words you can continue to lift unto the Lord asking him to hear our prayers and to keep our ears open for his answers. Don't be afraid to add your own words, phrases, sentences for the building project and any other matters you desire to bring before God.

Lord Hear our prayers for:		&	Lord we thank and praise you for:
FAITH	BUILDING TEAM		SAFETY
GROWTH	PARTY TEAM		TIMELY
KINDNESS	PRAYER TEAM		FASHIONABLE
JOY	FINANCIAL TEAM		HEALTH
PEACE	FUNDRAISING TEAM		TEAM WORK
PATIENCE	MARKETING TEAM		NO COMPLICATIONS
GOODNESS	CHANCE TAKERS		CO-OPERATION
FAITHFULNESS	UNDERWRITERS		PATIENCE
FUTURE	INSURANCE		LOVE____
PAST	KEVIN MCVICKER		MEMORIES
NEW FRIENDS	PATRICK MYERS		HOPES FOR
CONGREGATION	OUR STAFF		COMMUNITY
MUSIC	DREAMS		WELCOMING TO ALL
CHILDREN	OPPORTUNITIES		HELPFUL
YOUR PRESENCE LORD	BUILT ON SOLID GROUND		FAITHFUL
DESCENDENTS	WEATHER		FAMILIES
ANCESTORS	RISK TAKERS		ADAM KERBER
LEADERS	PRAYERS		SACRIFICE
TEACHERS	VOLUNTEERS		DAN BRENTZEL

At 9 AM the crunch occurred. Dan Miller's office (Ron Durika's old space) second floor facing Main Street was no more.

Current Prayer List as of 3.17.23

David Davitto, Stella Waltmire, Megen Harmon, Becky Jadlocki, Shirley Yohman, Larry Kramer, Sharon Kramer, Russ Riddle, John Duncan, Donna Westcoat, Jennifer Nagoda, Bryce Matthew Patrick, Clarence Copeland, JoAnn McKnight, Jerry Lomicka, Bill and Carol Lomicka, Thor Griffin, Theda Porterfield, Hope Riddle, Pete Legerski, Claire Halucka, Dee Morgan, Nancy Bostian, Howard Huss, Bethany, Susan N. Gandy, Gerry, Angela, Inna & family, Christian Mark Bell, LTC Nicholas Bell, Hope Gaebel, Penny Turner, Diane Waddle, Minna, Frank Sullivan, Marilyn Harmon, Susan Davis, Gene Neral, JoAnne May, Grace Sphoh, Becky Martello, Darlene K., John, Helen Deitch, Jim Armstrong, Lois Bennett, Carol Armstrong, Brittney, Ciaro, Holly Snyder, Brenda Barnes, Denny Trice, Jennifer, Tom

Our Service Personnel: Sgt. Luke Frye, Sgt. GY Sgt. Chris Keba, CDR Timothy Minor, EMFA Cody Weimer, Staff Sgt. Zachary Coleman, Vaughn Estepp, Spc. Noah Rady.

Update or add new requests using the prayer cards found in the sanctuary pew racks, calling Ginny Pellis (church secretary) at 724-863-5910 x113 or ginny@firstpresbyirwin.org, or email Taska Smola at tsmola@verizon.net.

Thank You!

To Linda Bugajski, Kathy Floyd. Susan Harmon, Betty Harvey, Diane Johnston, Sandy Kutz, Sharon Lunn, Joanne Popovich, Kathy Sullenberger and April Wateska for helping with the last newsletter.

To the following people that helped with packing and moving our offices to the social room and to other areas. We couldn't have done it without you!!! Judy Baker, Mary Ann Burdelski, Rick Burdelski, Janet Bentz, Curt Ciocca, Brenda Daniels, Chris Duckett, Declan Duckett, Wyatt Duckett, Steve Guffey, Les Hale, Glen Harmon, Sam Hensell, Fred Johnson, Linda Johnson, Keith Johnston, Charlene Lauderbaugh, Martha Patullo, Kim Minteer, Steve Minteer, Joanne Popovich, Bob Prehoda, Joe Smola, Taska Smola, Sam Strohm, and Anna Marie Woodle..

To the Party Team for hosting the luncheon following the Congregational Meeting, January 29. Great job!!

To the Boy Scouts for hosting Cheapest Lunch in February. They served a rigatoni lunch to 122 people.

To the Confirmation Class for hosting the March cheapest lunch. Great job!!

To Carol Armstrong, Phyllis Bornak, Cathy Dixon, Kathy Floyd, Susan Harmon, Bettie Harvey, Carol Hughes, Sandy Kutz. Joanne Popovich, and Jim Schlosser for their help putting together the annual report.

To Dan Brentzel for making the beautiful new cross for our sanctuary. It will be a permanent part of our sanctuary.

To Glen Harmon for organizing the Boiler Room and helping with soooo many other projects.

To Fred Johnson for building the walls for our new offices in the social room and numerous carpentry jobs

To Sam Hensell and Sam Strohm for taking down the signs from the corners of our property. Those signs have been donated to Springhill Furnace Presbyterian Church.

To Sam Hensell and Keith Johnston for installing the "For God's Glory & Irwin's Benefit" signs.

To Judy Baker, Diane Johnston, Phyllis Neral for stepping in to play organ since Marion retired.

To James Davis for playing trumpet and euphonium, Jeff Wright for playing trombone and Robin Toops for playing flute to accompany our faithful Church choir and congregation during worship.

To Amy Henry and her volunteers, Sharon Griser, Tom Hughes and Barb Rehberg for their ministry in the food pantry.

To Diane and Keith Johnston for burning financial statements and worn Bibles.

To Bob Popovich for taking pictures of the tear down of the Office Building and Perry Addition.

To Joanne and Bob Popovich for their appreciation to the staff.

Thank you to Adam Kerber for the tear down and excavation work for our new addition and to Steve Guffey for hauling away the debris. What a great beginning as at least 60 people watched those two work.

Addison Lee Pletz was baptized Sunday, January 29, 2023. The proud parents are Samuel and Carly Lynn Pletz.

With Heartfelt Sympathy

To Earl and Cheryl Kiser and family on the death of Earl's mother, Mary "Marjorie" Kiser.

To Russ and Jan Batchelor on the death of Russ's sister-in-law, Betty Batchelor.

To Gloria (Jeannie) and Royce Williams on the death of Gloria's brother Ed Sutton

To Becky Parry Jadlocki and family on the sudden death of her brother-in-law Bill Cole.

To Chris and Glenda Uranker & family on the death of wife/mom, Mary Uranker. Mary was our former child care supervisor for a number of years. She lovingly took care of so many children during worship and special events.

To Rev. Gary and Ella Filson on the death of Gary's mother, June Filson

First Presbyterian Church

April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 8:15am Worship Service 9:15am JumpStart 10:30am Worship Service, Child Care 11:30am Confirmation Class 11:30am Deacon meeting	27 6:30am GriefShare 6:30pm PNC	28 9:30am Circle 3 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts	29 5:30pm Youth Choir 6:00pm Youth Club K-5 7:00pm Chancel Choir	30 7:00pm Bell Choir	31 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	1 **9:30am Kids Easter Egg Hunt**
2 **Palm Sunday** 8:15am Worship Service 9:15am JumpStart 10:30am Worship Service, Youth Choir, Child Care 11:30am Cheapest Lunch and Learn 11:30am Confirmation Class	3 6:30am GriefShare 6:30pm Evangelism	4 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts 7:15pm Worship & Sacrament	5 5:30pm Youth Choir 6:00pm Youth Fellowship 7:00pm Chancel Choir	6 **Maundy Thursday** 9:30am Devotional meeting 7:00pm Worship Service, Communion	7 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord 7:00pm Worship Service	8
9 **Easter Sunday** 8:15am Worship Service Coffee Hour 10:30am Worship Service, Kids Sermon, Child Care	10 6:30am GriefShare	11 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts 6:30pm Fellowship	12 5:30pm Youth Choir 6:00pm Youth Club K-5 7:00pm Chancel Choir 7:00pm Stewardship & Finance	13 7:00pm Bell Choir 7:00pm Session	14 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	15
16 8:15am Worship Service 9:15am JumpStart 9:15am Refresh 10:00am Worship Service, Bell Choir, Child Care, Cookie Hour	17 6:30am GriefShare 6:30pm PNC	18 11:00am Staff Meeting 1:00pm Circle 1 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts	19 5:30pm Youth Choir 6:00pm Youth Fellowship 7:00pm Chancel Choir	20 6:30pm D-Team Meeting 7:00pm Bell Choir	21 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	22
23 8:15am Worship Service 9:15am JumpStart 9:15am Refresh 10:30am Worship Service, Child Care 11:30am Deacon meeting	24 6:30am GriefShare 6:30pm PNC	25 9:30am Circle 3 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts	26 5:30pm Youth Choir 6:00pm Youth Club K-5 Bowling Night 7:00pm Chancel Choir	27 7:00pm Bell Choir	28 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	29
30 8:15am Worship Service 9:15am JumpStart 9:15am Refresh 10:30am Worship Service, Child Care	1 6:30am GriefShare 6:30pm Evangelism 6:30pm PNC	2 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts 7:15pm Worship & Sacrament	3 5:30pm Youth Choir 6:00pm Youth Fellowship 7:00pm Chancel Choir	4 **National Day of Prayer** 9:30am Devotional meeting 7:00pm Bell Choir	5 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	6

First Presbyterian Church

May 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 8:15am Worship Service 9:15am JumpStart 9:15am Refresh 10:30am Worship Service, Child Care	1 6:30am GriefShare 6:30pm Evangelism 6:30pm PNC	2 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts 7:15pm Worship & Sacrament	3 5:30pm Youth Choir 6:00pm Youth Fellowship 7:00pm Chancel Choir	4 **National Day of Prayer** 9:30am Devotional meeting 7:00pm Bell Choir	5 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	6
7 Confirmation Class Reception 8:15am Worship Service 9:15am JumpStart 9:15am Refresh 10:30am Worship Service, Child Care 11:30am Cheapest Lunch	8 6:30am GriefShare 6:30pm PNC	9 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts 6:30pm Fellowship	10 5:30pm Youth Choir 7:00pm Chancel Choir 7:00pm Stewardship & Finance	11 7:00pm Bell Choir	12 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	13
14 8:15am Worship Service 8:15am Worship Service Coffee Hour 9:15am JumpStart 9:15am Refresh 10:30am Worship Service, Child Care, Coffee Hour	15 6:30am GriefShare	16 11:00am Staff Meeting 1:00pm Circle 1 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts	17 5:30pm Youth Choir 6:00pm Youth Fellowship 7:00pm Chancel Choir	18 7:00pm Bell Choir 7:00pm Session	19 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	20 9:00am Leadership Retreat
21 8:15am Worship Service 9:00am Graduation Breakfast 9:15am JumpStart 9:15am Refresh 10:30am Worship Service, Child Care	22 6:30am GriefShare	23 9:30am Circle 3 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts	24 5:30pm Youth Choir 7:00pm Chancel Choir	25 7:00pm Bell Choir	26 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	27
28 8:15am Worship Service, Communion 9:15am JumpStart 9:15am Refresh 10:30am Worship Service, Communion, Child Care 11:30am Deacon meeting	29 6:30am GriefShare	30 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Cub Scouts	31 5:30pm Youth Choir 7:00pm Chancel Choir	1 9:30am Devotional meeting 7:00pm Bell Choir	2 1:00pm Knit-Wit(nesses) for the Lord	3 6:00am Evangelism 6:00pm Altoona Curve Ballgame & Fireworks