

The First Presbyterian Church of Lewisburg

18 Market Street, Lewisburg, PA 17837

www.first-presby.org T: 570-524-4419

Sunday Worship: Sunday School – 9:00 a.m. (Virtual Only)

Worship Service - 10:30 a.m. (In-person or Livestream)

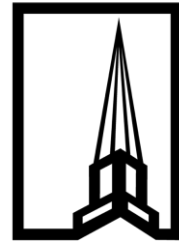
My wife and kids can tell you that picking out Christmas gifts is not one of my better qualities. What they unwrap from me on Christmas morning tends to be practical, sensible, and very often - boring. (I am that family member who will give you socks, and not mean it as a joke!)

And while I struggle to find that perfect, thrilling surprise for under the tree, this Christmas I'm going to challenge myself – and you – to get both creative and expansive in gift-giving. Since we will not be celebrating God's gift of Jesus' birth in-person with many of our family and friends, the things we gift, and send, to one another carry greater meaning this year than in a "normal" Christmas.

The good news is that gifts that mean a lot don't have to be expensive, just thoughtful. What will let someone know you are thinking especially of them, and their particular needs and challenges right now? What gift will add meaning to their life long past Christmas Day, and on into the weeks of COVID-limited living that stretch out before us? What can you give, or do, or offer, or share with them that will encourage? Uplift? Inspire? Bring a smile? This is the year to get creative!

I would also charge you to look at who is near at hand who might benefit from an unexpected gift this Christmas, someone you don't usually give a gift to. Do you have a neighbor who won't be having their out-of-town family coming to visit this year? Is there a member of our church whom you haven't seen in-person in weeks, or maybe months? A call or card or note or batch of cookies will go a long way this season, letting someone know that you remember them, and care about them. And that God does too.

Jesus entered our world in a time, a way, and a form that nobody expected. And the first to see him, the shepherds, weren't famous for being fancy or extravagant (though I like to imagine one of them offered up his extra pair of socks to keep baby Jesus warm). They gave out of what they had to give –



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

LEWISBURG, PA

Upcoming Events

Sunday, Dec. 6

10:30 a.m. Holy Communion

Sunday, Dec. 13

11:45 a.m. [Congregational Meeting](#)

Thursday, Dec. 24

7:00 p.m. & 9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Services

Friday, Dec. 25

11:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Christmas Dinner To Go



December Meetings

Tuesday, Dec. 15

7:00 p.m. Zoom Session Meeting

December Ushers

Clint Shurtliffe
Peg Bouton
Sharon Pearce

their time, and attention, and affection. They honored God with simple, but meaning-full gifts.

Do your best this Christmas to give what you can – to those far, and to those near. And may your gifts bring unexpected joy, and hope, and light into these darkened days. Just like God's own best gifts do.

Peace and Merry Christmas to you,

Pastor Ryan

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

December Birthdays

3 Erik Temple

4 David Han

6 Cole Temple

8 Jackie Wottrich

10 Gail Ross

16 Jim Friery, Kristen Mebius

18 Calvin Reif

20 Amy Tirpak

23 Marguerite Santorine

28 Betty Comerer, Brent Papson

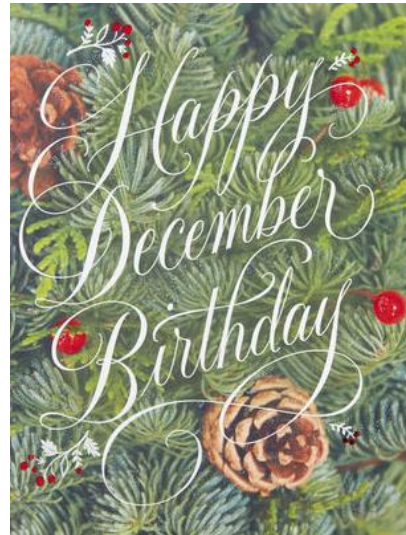
December Anniversaries

12 Kirk & Paige Kerstetter

13 Brad & Heidi Zimmerman

18 Bennett & Courtney Remmey

29 Rich & Amy Cooper, Dale & Mindy Lind



Update: Thanksgiving Dinner To Go

A very small group of workers and a large number of church and community members cooking and donating the fixings for Thanksgiving dinner, pulled together 160 meals for our church family and community. Despite the oven not working, we were able to warm up food and send 48 meals to be delivered in addition to 112 drive-by pickups. Everyone was very thankful, kind and appreciative. We are showing our community that even amid a pandemic, we will find a way to reach out and let others know we care about them. Thank you for your donations of your time, food and efforts.



Congregational Life and Volunteers

Nobody enjoys wearing a mask. I find this prayer makes it a little bit easier. – Pastor Ryan

“A Prayer for Putting on a Face Mask”

(by Rev. Richard Bott, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Canada)

Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacramental nature of wearing this cloth. Let it be a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbors, as I love myself.

Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes. Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly, not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet. May this simple piece of cloth be a shield and banner, and may each breath it holds, be filled with Your love.

In Your name, and in that love, I pray. Amen.

The Himmelreich Library

To protect against COVID transmission, patrons are limited to browsing the stacks for 15 minutes at a time. You are welcome to call (570) 523-3377, or email librarian@first-presby.org to have books set aside for when you arrive. The Himmelreich collection can be searched on-line, and Caroline Campagna is glad to help you with access to that resource.

Current hours –

Monday, 11am-1pm, 5-7pm.

Tuesday, 12-2pm

Wednesday, 11am-1pm

Thursday, CLOSED

Friday, 1-3pm

Saturday & Sunday – CLOSED

Church Building Access and Church Office Hours

Because of an increasing incidence of people from outside of the congregation wandering into the church during the day and evening hours, we are making changes to our building security policy. At our November meeting, the Session approved keeping all exterior doors locked unless there are two or more staff members in the building. We are making these changes to ensure that both our staff and any members coming into the building, feel safe doing so.

If you need to pick-up or drop something off or have a project at the church, please call the church office at (570) 524-4419, or email Alison at info@first-presby.org. You are welcome to call Pastor Ryan at (570) 903-0600, or Matt Rishell, Director of Youth Ministry, at (717) 515-4057. We will work with you to get what you need!

The Lewisburg Area School District's change to all at-home learning has impacted our office hours.

Currently, the church office is open on Wednesdays, from 9am-2pm. At other times, we ask that you please contact our staff to make sure someone is there.

Poinsettias and Wreaths

Beginning on Sunday, December 13th, lovely Christmas poinsettias will adorn our sanctuary. A 5-7 bloom poinsettia plant costs \$12.00 and can be placed in honor or memory of a loved one. Ordered poinsettias should be picked up following the Christmas Eve services. Delivery will also be available this year. Christmas wreaths will adorn our church doors during the Advent season. Six \$45.00 sponsors are needed to cover the cost of the wreaths. To sponsor a poinsettia or wreath, please send payment and dedication to the office no later than Tuesday, December 8th. Order forms are available in the narthex or orders can be emailed to info@first-presby.org.



Friday, December 25th from 11:30-12:30

This year our annual Christmas dinner will be offered for pick-up or local delivery only. Reservations for meals will be required and orders must be received by Tuesday, December 22nd. If you are interested in volunteering to help or making a donation, please call Paul Miller at 570-716-7132. To reserve your meal, please call the church office at 570-524-4419 and leave a message or email Alison at info@first-presby.org.

Operation Christmas Child Drop Off Update!

8 Days, 35 Volunteers from Churches throughout the Susquehanna Valley, 3,722 total shoeboxes collected curbside at the First Presby Drop Off Center, 263 cartons of OCC shoeboxes, six trips to the Sunbury Central Drop Off to deliver our cartons, and feeling God's presence throughout! What an

amazing week! It was definitely different this year, collecting boxes curbside while wearing masks and gloves, hand sanitizing and working to have a "no contact" or "little contact" drop off. Thank you to everyone that prayed, volunteered, packed a shoebox, donated filler items, encouraged and helped out. The total number of shoeboxes for the Susquehanna Valley Area was 18,662. All those shoeboxes went, by truck, to the Baltimore Processing Center and after being sorted and readied for shipment, they will proceed to over 120 countries around the world. Each one will be presented to a child by a church-sponsored group along with a booklet entitled, "The Greatest Gift" – stories about Jesus in their own language. A simple gift to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



Worship from Home

At each meeting of the Session, we evaluate and reassess the precautions we're taking to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We are committed to maintaining as safe a facility as we can for those who want to worship in person, and will continue to provide a livestream broadcast and recorded version of our service for those who choose to stay at home.

You can access our worship services over the internet in several ways.

1. Facebook: At 10:30am on Sunday morning, you can participate from home by going to our church's Facebook page, **@FirstpresbyLewisburg**. On Saturday evening, we post a link, and picture of the church, that will take you to a Youtube video. We start streaming live video from the sanctuary around 10:20am. If you visit our Facebook page anytime after Sunday morning, the link will take you to the stored Youtube video of that week's service.
2. Website: If you don't use Facebook, you can find the same Youtube link on our church website: <https://first-presby.org>. The scrolling header on our front page will have a headline, "Sunday's date – 10:30am Worship Service and Livestream!" Click on the text of that headline and it will take you to a page where you will find more information about the service, and a picture of the church. The picture is a link to Youtube, from which you can watch the livestream on Sunday morning, or, anytime afterward, find the recording of the service.
3. Youtube: If you want to access our worship service directly from Youtube, go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search "First Presby Lewisburg." The search results will bring up my channel, Ryan Kraus. (There are other Ryan Kraus' out there – be sure to look for "First Presbyterian Church of Lewisburg, PA" in the description!) Click "Ryan Kraus," and under the VIDEOS tab you'll find all the services we've recorded, starting with the most recent. You can subscribe to this channel to make it easier to find when you revisit [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

A Note on Communion: For our in-person services in the sanctuary, we will continue celebrating the Lord's Supper using the prepackaged "fellowship cups." Any Sunday that we share this sacrament you are welcome to participate with bread and grape juice (or wine) which you already have at home. If you would prefer to share in the same elements that we're using here at church, we are glad to bring a supply of "fellowship cups" to you ahead of time. Please call the church office and let us know the best way to deliver them.



If you are unable to view the weekly worship service online and would prefer a dvd copy of the service to watch, please notify the office at info@first-presby.org or leave a message at 570-524-4419. We are also working on providing bulletins and sermon notes prior to the service to anyone who may be interested. These pages could be mailed or emailed by request.



“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Virtual Sunday School! Every Sunday at 9 am, our kindergarten through 5th grade students gather together online for a 30-minute lesson led by our rotating team of Sunday School teachers.



There are so many things to love about Christmas. Presents, decorations, bad sweaters, great music! One of the best parts are all the twinkling lights. Christmas is sometimes referred to as the season of light. Not just because of the colorful lights you see hanging on houses and trees, but because we celebrate the birth of Jesus – the Light of the World. “Light it Up” lessons will

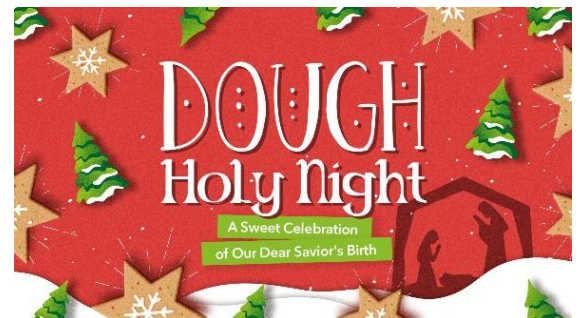
shed light on the amazing story of Jesus’ birth.



Nursery is open! The nursery is now open during Sunday morning worship services. It is available for children ages 3 and under, accompanied by 1 adult. No nursery volunteers are assigned at this time. Please continue to follow our safety precautions including sanitizing hands before play and wearing masks during play.

Dough Holy Night! Gather your family and some simple ingredients! It’s time for a fun and interactive experience combining sweet Snickerdoodle cookies with the best story ever – the story of Jesus Christ! You can access everything you need for this fun experience by visiting

<https://www.gocurriculum.com/dough-holy-night-parent-portal>. Use password LETSDOUGH.



Follow us on Facebook @ FirstPresbyLewisburgPA

Corey Jusko

Director of Children's Ministry

firstpresbykids@gmail.com

December Youth Newsletter

I hope this newsletter finds you all well, staying healthy, and ready for the holiday season!

Unfortunately, due to the recent rise in cases and local school boards deciding to move to online-only instruction, the youth program has also moved to virtual only. This isn't ideal for sure, but we're happy that we still have the opportunity to meet together and continue to learn and grow our faith.

We are still moving through our small group book study on Blue Like Jazz, by Donald Miller! Although we are meeting online for small group as well, we're still able to talk about a lot of great things every Thursday night! And it's not too late to join! The chapters are independent, so your student can feel free to join us at anytime.

It's a challenging time for all of us, so we thank you for your continued support. We hope to be back in person soon, but of course we will not do so until we can be sure that we can do so as safely as possible.

We ask for your continued prayers for our ministries and for the health and well-being of all our students. We ask for prayers in an unusually trying time for us all.

Matthew Rishell – Director of Youth Ministry

Would you like to be included in our weekly Youth Newsletter to stay up to date on all of our latest events and updates? Contact Matt at firstpresbyyouth@first-presby.org

First Presbyterian Church Officers:

Term Expires 2021

Session

Gene Heid
Mike Pursley
Amie Reif

Deacons

Jan Temple
Peg Bouton
Barb Schmidt

Trustees

Wayne Samuelson
Eric Schmidt

Term Expires 2022

Session

Marcia Thomas
Ryan Graver
Roger Curran
Kathy Storm

Deacons

Amber Lind
Glenn Dobbs
Ann Miller
Karen Ishii

Trustees

Katie Cavanagh
Tom Rich
Randy Storm

Nominated Officers to be voted on Dec. 13th at the Congregational Meeting*:

Term Expires 2023

Session

Steve Mebius
Bonnie Troxell
Victor Vogel

Deacons

Kristen Mebius
Ann Roll
Nancy Steckel
Sally Vogel

Trustees

Bill Black
Craig Harley
Dan Wagner

Alternates: Jesse Walsh (Session), Kim Wagner (Deacons), Bill Roll (Trustees)

Nominating Committee Members: Craig Harley, Gene Heid, Karen Ishii, Ann Roll, Kathy Storm, Mary Kay Torretti

*Votes will also be counted through mail-in ballots for those worshipping from home.