

Special points of interest:

- Daylight Saving Time Ends
- Noticing Exercise
- Highland Augusta Mission Community Highlights
- Advent Bible Study
- Much more...

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A Message from our General Presbyter

We continue to have a pastor's zoom call twice a month to check in and share concerns and ideas. During a recent call we began talking about Advent and Christmas. It seemed like a long way away then, but doesn't feel that way now as news reports remind us to send packages early, begin your shopping now and well – Hallmark has begun its count down to Christmas!

We know that the way we celebrate the holidays cannot be the same this year. Thanksgiving for my family will be a big zoom call – thankful for technology and that everyone is safe and healthy knowing that other families are not as fortunate as ours.

As much as we love one another and miss being with one another, we know that we need to do things differently this year so that we can all be back together in the future. So, our challenge this year is to think creatively – in gift giving, in planning worship, in being community. The Committee on Church Vitality and Transformation will be sharing some ideas to “prime the pump”. (See page 4)

Please be open to trying new things – as much as we want tradition! Please be patient with one another – as much as we want to have some kind of “normalcy”! Please remember that you are children of God and that this season is about the coming of the Son of God, not us. Let us be kind, refrain from complaining and instead give compliments. Give new things a chance for they can be as meaningful as well-worn customs. And know that God holds us all as we continue to get through this together!

*Happy Thanksgiving,
Bronwen*



Presbytery Staff

Bronwen Boswell,
General Presbyter & Stated Clerk
Email – presbytersc@shenpres.org

Nancy Meehan Yao,
Associate General Presbyter
Email – assocgp@shenpres.org

Kim Stroupe, Admin. Assistant
Email – kims@shenpres.org

Heather Carter, Funds Admin.
Email – bookkeeper@shenpres.org

Donna Lanaghan, Communications
Email – shenpres@shenpres.org

Larry Holsinger, Treasurer

Associate General Presbyter—Nancy Meehan Yao

As I write this, it is a beautiful fall day. But the days are getting shorter, and the calendar pages turn towards the end of the year. It has been a year filled with disruption, grief, and finding new ways to be the church. “The church is the body of Christ, and Christ gives to the church all the gifts necessary to be his body,” our Book of Order tells us. “You are already the body of Christ,” former moderator Joan Gray writes. “I will be with you always,” Christ says in Matthew.

Friends, this disruption is hard. We will not be able to celebrate holidays in the ways we have in the past. The ways we worship, even if we can be physically in the church building, will be different. We might feel grief, or anxiety, or depression, or just feel stuck. This is called “liminal space.” We are in the middle- not what we used to be, but also not yet what we will be. But we can take comfort, knowing that the Triune God is with us, that God is always God even in the messiest middle of change.

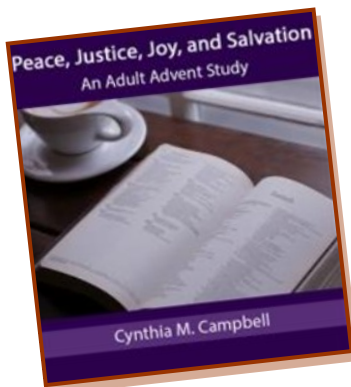
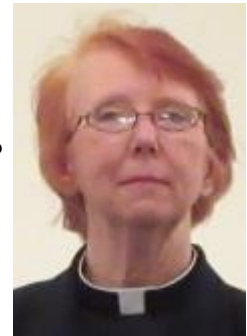
When you are feeling those things, it might be helpful to do a “noticing” exercise. Sitting comfortably, look around you and notice:

- 5 things you can see: Your hands, the sky, a plant on your desk.
- 4 things you can physically feel: Your feet on the ground, a ball, your chair seat.
- 3 things you can hear: The wind blowing, children’s laughter, your breath.
- 2 things you can smell: Fresh-cut grass, coffee, soap.
- 1 thing you can taste: A mint, gum, the fresh air¹.

And then I want you to notice one more thing—where have you seen God in your life? Give thanks to God, who will never leave or forsake us.

Blessings, Nancy

¹<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/>



Advent Bible Study

Monday, November 30, December 7, 14 and 21, 11 am – noon.

ALL are invited to this study- please share with friends and congregation members!

We will be using Cynthia M. Campbell’s **Peace, Justice, Joy and Salvation: An Adult Advent Study**.

To register, please contact Donna at shenpres@shenpres.org. The Zoom link will be sent the week before the study begins to those who register.

The offices of Shenandoah Presbytery will be closed on Wednesday, November 25 and Thursday, November 26 to celebrate Thanksgiving.





As we live into a socially distant season, the time is drawing near for us to prepare our hearts for the birth of the Savior. We do this in Advent, with Scripture and devotional readings, candle lightings, and church events. Many churches are considering how to adapt traditions and practices for a safe and healthy way of celebrating Advent. Below are some resources—and please share with the Presbytery how your congregation is celebrating the Advent journey. Advent begins Sunday, November 29.

PC(USA) store:

https://www.pcusastore.com/Content/Site119/Basics/13841Advent2020_00000143565.pdf

Episcopal Relief- 100 days of love

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/1000daysoflove/2020advent/>

Illustrated Ministry has life sized nativity figures to cut/color, etc- many churches are doing more outside this season- Note: these are downloadable, but you need to order “vector files” for life size

<https://store.illustratedministry.com/collections/advent/products/illustrated-nativity-figures?variant=31924684652642>

from Illustrated Ministries- Advent 2020

<https://illustratedmin.s3.amazonaws.com/freebies/Advent-2020.pdf>

At home for Advent:

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/faith-at-home-for-advent-2020.pdf>

Faithful Families Book- Traci Smith

<http://www.traci-smith.com/faithfulfamilieschristmas>

Creative Communications for the Parish

<https://www.creativecommunications.com/Products/CategoryCenter/CPSEAS/Seasonal.aspx>

Advent in a Bag- ideas

<https://vanessamyers.org/family-advent-bags/>

“Rethinking Our Witness, Advent and Beyond!” From Your Committee on Church Vitality & Transformation (CCVT)

We just completed another engaging CCVT meeting via ZOOM. I am thankful for the service of those who you elected and who faithfully serve in this ministry. This afternoon, we discussed two areas I would like to briefly highlight:

Consider this question, “In the midst of a pandemic, how will your church witness outside the church building and share the good news of the gospel during Advent and Christmas?”

Some thoughts from today’s meeting and recent pastors’ meetings: move the Advent wreath to the front lawn; hanging of the “outdoor greens”; live nativity; “human luminaries”; virtual Christmas pageant; share daily Advent devotions on-line; “Advent in a Bag”; drive-in Christmas Eve service; curbside “Christmas cookie swap”; curbside Christmas breakfast; food pantry drive; shelter supply drive; Blue Christmas/Longest Night service of lament on-line. These are just some ideas. What ideas might you and/or your church have?

“Rethinking Evangelism” Conference – Several of us attended this PCUSA conference October 12-14 via ZOOM. Our committee is now exploring offering a possible workshop via ZOOM in the first quarter of 2021. How do we define and how should we redefine “evangelism?” How do we share our faith? What are the “nuts and bolts” of being a hospitable congregation? How do we get beyond the numbers? How do we go beyond the walls of our church buildings?

Submitted by David Witt, Chair, CCVT

Church Missions Update

The Committee on Mission and Outreach is in the process of collecting information about what your church or churches are doing in mission and outreach. Please take a few minutes and fill out the form that is attached and return it to Dee Sparger at missions@frontroyalpres.org. Let's think about what your church has done before the Covid19 outbreak and please include what new missions that you are doing.



The Committee on Mission and Outreach is in the process of collecting information about what your church or churches are doing in mission and outreach. Please take a few minutes and fill out [this attached form](#) and return it to Dee Sparger at missions@frontroyalpres.org. You may also download an editable form on our website at <https://shenpres.org/outreach/>. Scroll down and click on "Church Mission Activities".

Let's think about what your church has done before the Covid19 outbreak and please include what new missions that you are doing.

Blessing of the Animals



Union and Zetta gathered on Sunday evening, October 4 to observe the Blessings of the Animals. While there were few in attendance those who came were not disappointed. Pastor Hensley brought her puppy, Pepper who can be seen in her Halloween costume.

It was a joyful time for all in attendance!



Congratulations to Woodstock Church!

Many thanks go to the Woodstock Church for being the first church to return their acceptances. Reminder: the deadline to return the acceptance is December 16, 2020.



Bags Needed!



Trinity Presbyterian Church continues to provide food to families of Keister Elementary students who are struggling with food insecurity. During this time, the need continues to grow.

When we began we were packing around 20 bags a week, and grew to 60 bags per week in partnership with the PTO. Now that things are settling a bit and school counselors are in better contact with families, we understand that the need is far greater. We have increased distribution and are now sending out 100 bags each week. That represents more than 20% of the student body.

That means we are also using many paper bags each week. The paper grocery store bags with handles - like the bags that Martin's uses for delivery pickup - are perfect, and we would love to repurpose your used bags. Bags may be brought to Trinity, where there is a plastic bin outside of the main church doors for collection. Thank you!



Resilience & Renewal: Virtual Retreat for Pastors

Shenandoah Presbytery has scheduled the virtual retreat, Resilience and Renewal for **Monday, November 9** from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon.

This three-hour virtual retreat is designed to give faith leaders a chance to take a breath and a break in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants will experience essential healing and resilience-building tools, including storytelling, strengthening positive connections with others and spiritual practices. This retreat, grounded in relaxation and self-care techniques, will provide an opportunity to experience respite and offers opportunities for small group sharing in breakout rooms in addition to plenary sessions.

When: **Nov 9, 2020 09:00 AM**

Register in advance for this meeting:

[https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tjYpdeCvqjwsHdV6JFOfhXiQ0iZipeGSH9Yp](https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tjYpdeCvqjwsHdV6JFOfhXiQ0iZipeGSH9Yp)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. ***Please keep this email as it will have the link to join the meeting.***

This retreat will be limited to 20 participants so register soon.

The retreat will be led by PDA staff and National Response Team volunteers. The content of this retreat differs from the virtual programs they have offered in recent months (Building Resilience Webinar and Faith Leader Support Meetings), which remain available to all who are interested at pda.pcusa.org/page/esc-webinar/.

Family Systems Event for Pastors

When most people think about Christmas, they also think about family. As the holidays approach, the stress in our families and our congregations will increase, and will likely be made more challenging by the pandemic. Rev. John Bethard, Charles Town Presbyterian Church, will be facilitating a brief overview of family systems theory with an eye toward practical tools to help us engage in meaningful ministry at this important time of year. This event is for all pastors.

This event is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 11, 9:30 to 11:30 am**. To register, contact Donna at shenpres@shenpres.org or 540-433-2556.

Highlights from Highland Augusta Mission Community

Betty Gruber: We have kept HELP (Health Equipment Loan Program) open even during COVID (simply by appointment and curbside service early on) and now by open hours again but still doing curbside service for our clients. Not only that, but we started our Capital Campaign to buy our building in February. We have raised over \$87,000 toward our \$200,000 goal. We are currently in a Rent-to-own agreement with the owner while we finish qualifying for our mortgage.

We continue to keep the food pantry going. We did miss the one in March because we didn't have time to figure out how to do it safely. It is curbside service as well and the boxes are prepackaged ready for them to take with them.

We have been doing online services, and more recently we have added outdoor service at our picnic pavilion outside. We will do that as long as the weather cooperates. We continue to post Sunday Worship Services online weekly. We are now in discussions with how to do Sunday School. The ladies have been continuing their last Sunday morning prayer meeting at 9 AM.

A small active group (started as six people and grew to 12 people) in the community, which includes several ladies from Loch Willow, have made and donated more than 19,000 reusable three-layer masks. Most were donated to the three primary local hospitals (Augusta Health, UVA, and Sentara RMH), Western State, Augusta County Fire and Rescue, Nursing homes, assisted living facilities, schools, the homeless, the food pantries, individuals, the law enforcement, The Community Foundation of the Greater Blue Ridge, and many, many other groups. If anyone needs elastic for making face masks, we never ran out and can set someone up who wants to sew for mask donations.

Reed Hopkins: Loch Willow received a special offering for Valley Mission in the early stages of the COVID shutdown. The Mission's thrift store had to close temporarily, which cost them much of their income for the shelter's operating costs. Loch Willow raised, I think, about \$1800.

Otherwise, we are keeping up our usual mission activities. The Churchville Food Pantry and the HELP closet are still operating, with Loch Willow's involvement. On World Communion Sunday (Oct. 4) we will dedicate our annual Mission Support offering, which helps support our sponsored overseas mission workers.

Linda Fields: Second Presbyterian in Waynesboro has been able to keep our Disciples' Kitchen lunch meal program operating each Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday throughout the pandemic. Meals are prepared offsite by the groups who normally prepared them for us and are brought to the church to be distributed in our parking lot to those in need of a meal. Due to the age of many of our regular volunteers they did feel comfortable to remain on-site to hand out the meals. Rev. April Cranford, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian in Waynesboro, reached out to the local pastors' association and other outreach groups in the community. Through these groups, we had individuals from area churches and the community volunteer to distribute the meals. Many of these were pastors and school teachers. With school starting back and some of the churches reopening, some of these folks were no longer able to volunteer. Several of the groups preparing the meals are now providing between 1 and 3 volunteers to help distribute the meals. We plan to continue distributing the meals in our parking lot throughout the winter and next spring. Many of the meals during the warmer months consisted of sandwiches, chips, fruit, and a cold beverage (tea, lemonade, water). We hope to be able to provide more hot meals and include coffee and hot chocolate as beverages during the colder months. In the spring we will evaluate the status of the pandemic and any vaccines to determine when it may be safe to reopen our dining hall.

Mike Fallin: I know Hebron has been holding drive-in services every Sunday and holding communion with individual "kits". Hebron has started helping with a school program at a local community center, the Valley Mission in Staunton.

Tommy Carrico: At Finley Memorial, we have had to adapt our school backpack program but are excited to have expanded to a year-round program. Working with our two local elementary schools we have been able to send extra food home to children on free or reduced lunch plans.

We have also sought to expand our mission partnerships in the area, providing volunteers and offerings for Waynesboro Area Refuge Ministry, Love, Inc., the Calvary Methodist Food Bank, and others. We are also expanding our newly formed relationship with a school in the Dominican Republic, Freedom International, founded by a Presbyterian minister who formerly served in Roanoke. We highlighted some of our mission projects in our Labor Day of Service Digital Worship Experience."

Dear Shenandoah Presbytery, members, and congregations,

We here at **Presbyterian Hunger Program** are writing to sincerely say thank you for your gifts. They are a huge help in a hard year, showing both your presence and care, as well as financial undergirding of this ministry that works to alleviate hunger and eliminate its root causes of hunger and poverty.

As people of faith, we're called to notice, pray for, and act in the world around us. And we're called to speak hope, to be beacons in difficult times. We all know that so far in 2020, we are living in the midst of an intense, exhausting, difficult period.

Your contributions are a sign of hope. Because of you, churches and organizations are able to distribute more food to people who are hungry and also to do education and advocacy to help ensure future food security for vulnerable communities. Because of you, global partners living in places of war, violence, famine, drought or flooding have better access to safety, health, and basic needs. Because of you, activists working on root causes of hunger who have been targeted, threatened, or worn out, know that they are not alone.

The people, churches and organizations that we relate to in this work also bring hope to this world, and they show signs of how love, mercy, and justice can break through difficult moments in history to shine brightly. We are grateful for them, and grateful for you, and grateful to have this calling entrusted to us by God, who holds the whole world in caring hands.

Thank you,



Rebecca Barnes
Coordinator, Presbyterian Hunger Program
www.pcusa.org/hunger

**Photo thanks to PHP partner BeLoved Asheville*



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(See Numbers 14)

11-26-2003

THANKSGIVING IN THE WILDERNESS

**PRESBYTERY OF
SHENANDOAH**

1111 North Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Phone: 540-433-2556
Fax: 540-433-6830

E-mail: shenpres@shenpres.org

ShenPres.org

Shenandoah Presbytery

A Community of Christ for Worship, Nurture and Mission

SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY is a covenant body where:

- CONGREGATIONS are empowered to be centers for mission
- PEOPLE OF GOD are equipped to be Disciples of Christ in a challenging world
- CHURCH LEADERS and members are nurtured and strengthened for service
- OPEN COMMUNICATION and information are used constructively and creatively to keep us connected

Dates to Remember!

November 2020

- 3 - CPT 10:00 am
- 4 - CPM 10:00 am
- 5 - Moffett Grant Committee 2:00 pm
- 7 - CMO 9:30 am
- 10 - Staff Meeting 10:00 am
- 10 - MRMC 12:00 pm
- 10 - CNCD 3:30 pm
- 11 - Nominations 2:00 pm
- 12 - CRM 9:30 am
- 18 - Shenandoah Press Deadline
- 19 - CPA 1:30 pm

Other Dates

- 9 - Virtual Retreat for Pastors 9:00 am—12:00 pm
- 11 - Family Systems for Pastors 9:30 am—11:30 am
- 12 - Pastors' Meeting 12:00 pm
- 14 - PW CT Meeting 10:00 am
- 17 - Stated Meeting of Presbytery 9:30 am
- 25 & 26 - Office Closed for Thanksgiving
- 30 - Advent Study Begins 11:00 am—12:00 pm

* Unless otherwise noted, all meetings will be held through Zoom Meeting.

