

First Presbyterian Church of Strasburg

News for November 16, 2025

Dear FPC family and friends,

I can't remember the last time that I didn't go to church on Sunday. Even when we are traveling with my family in Seattle, or Iceland, or Boston, wherever we may be, when it is Sunday morning, we go to church. We try to go to a Presbyterian Church (USA), but that doesn't always work out. This Sunday, today, I find myself on the way to the airport to join you all in Strasburg, albeit later in the day. I hate missing church on Sunday, I don't feel like I have practiced and so I feel a bit unready and unprepared for the week ahead. Fortunately you won't feel that way because we have Michael Wilson who is preaching and he is, well, great!

What a week it has been. Last Sunday, November 9, Beth Feiler, our children's ministry director, and Nicole Keays, our administrative assistant and implementer extraordinaire, that's her official title, and I headed out to Charlotte, North Carolina to take part in the Font and Faith Initiative held by the extension campus of Union Theological Seminary. We received a grant from the Lilly foundation for us to participate in this conference and so all we had to do was show up. There were other churches there and we were all looking at ways in which to involve children in worship. It was helpful. We came home with a lot of ideas.

I also came home with the realization that it is not normal in the Presbyterian church to have 30 children in worship like we do. We were asked to focus on one way in which we could improve in getting children more involved in the life of the church and we focused on getting those 30 children into Sunday School. For some reason here at FPC from worship to coffee hour we see almost everyone, but then in Sunday School it is sometimes slim pickings. We have some ideas on what to do about this, and we want to hear from you, the parents on what can we do as a church to offer something that would be potentially better attended on Sunday morning.

We came home on Wednesday, and then on Thursday I jumped on another plane and headed to Louisville to attend the Moderator's conference at our denominational headquarters. I know I have told you all before but I tend to forget that I am the Moderator of the Presbytery of Donegal. That basically means that I run the Presbytery meetings on a quarterly basis where decisions are made that sometimes impact the local church, and most of the time do not.

On Tuesday we have a Presbytery meeting which will very much impact our local church and the ministries in which we are involved. Walter Kondratowski, who is a ruling elder in our church but not currently serving on session, has passed all of his ordination exams and is being voted on to be made certified ready for ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Kinda a big deal. Our hope is that we will be able to, as a Presbytery, get him ordained into the Our Table ministry so that he can continue with that ministry in the powerful ways that he is currently involved, but as an ordained pastor. If you want to come along and support him please do so. It will take place on Tuesday afternoon at the Trinity Berwyn Presbyterian church.

This Moderator's conference here in Louisville was very helpful for me in so many different ways. Not only reminding me how to run a Presbytery meeting which is intimidating for someone like me, but I also saw for the first time in probably 13 years one of my confirmation kids from Florida who is now a Moderator of her Presbytery in Tennessee. Do you remember Bailey Pickens? She was a student at Yale Divinity school when she preached for us back in 2012. Well, she is now the Rev. Bailey Pickens and it was such an incredible sense

of pride for me after learning about how to incorporate children in worship at the beginning of the week, to see one of the children that the church has helped nurture and I was a part of her journey preparing to be a moderator herself. God is at work in incredibly powerful ways if we would just have the eyes to see.

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Bob

HAPPENING IN THE LIFE OF FPC...

CHURCH DECORATING DAY ~ On Monday, November 24th at 6pm, we will be decking the halls and preparing the church for Advent and Christmas. Come join in the fun, have pizza and help us to decorate!

CHURCH BIRTHDAY BRUNCH ~ Join us on Sunday, November 23rd at 9:30am (after the 8:30am service) to recognize, celebrate and honor the 50+ year members with a brunch in Fellowship Hall. This year's menu is tater tot breakfast casserole with ham, fruit and sweets. As in the past, we will need volunteers to bake and bring to church on the 23rd. You will be provided with all ingredients and materials necessary, including the recipe. We are also in need of help to set up Fellowship Hall on Saturday, November 22nd. There will be no Sunday School or nursery care during the brunch on Sunday, November 23rd. Please contact Theresa Rineer at 717-682-9954. Thank you!

IGNITED STUDENTS ANNUAL FAMILY FOOTBALL LEAGUE will take place TODAY, Sunday, November 16th from 4-6pm at the L-S Practice Field. Adults vs. Students (Grades 6-12) compete for the FFL trophy and bragging rights. Come on out to play or cheer from the sidelines! Bring a lawn chair and dress warm. Please RSVP to Kristin at kristin@straspres.org or 908-581-5050.

Advent Night Sunday, November 30th ~ 5pm Come join us as we celebrate the first Sunday of the Advent season! This night is for EVERYONE as we wait and prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth at Christmas. Adults create a craft to take home! Kids create a craft to take home and one to decorate the tree at church! Sing Christmas Carols with Goggie and Friends! Decorate a Christmas cookie! Dinner will include lasagna and chicken tenders. Please bring a dish to share: appetizer, side, dessert or beverage. A sign-up sheet will be in the welcome area under the TV. If you have any questions, please see Beth Feiler or Andrea Petrokonis.