



Providence Post



MAY 2023

The year is moving on quickly and it is the month of May already. The first week of May marks two events which happen to be on the same day this year. The first event, the annual National Day of Prayer, occurs on the first Thursday of May. While there have been days of prayer called for throughout the history of our nation, a National Day of Prayer did not become a permanent annual event until 1952 when President Truman made it a permanent annual observance on July 4th. It was President Reagan who changed it to the first Thursday in May. The second event that occurs on Thursday, May 4, is also known as Star Wars Day. It is based on a phrase often used in Star Wars movies, "may the force be with you" which sounds like "may the fourth be with you." The force in Star Wars movies is the mysterious power of the Jedi and the evil Sith.

It is interesting to contrast the two meanings of the day. While the force mentioned in Star Wars movies is fictional and only certain people can wield it, prayer is available to all Christians and is powerful because it connects us to our Creator who loves us and answers prayer. Prayer draws us into a deeper relationship with God and has power to change people and circumstances.

The first way prayer changes things is by changing us. It helps us to become more like Him. As prayer causes us to line up our desires and values with His, God begins using our prayers to work in the situations that we are praying for. The second way prayer changes things is relationally. When we join together with others in prayer, our fellowship is strengthened with each other, and we can be assured that God hears us. In Matthew 18:19, Jesus says, "If two of you agree on Earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in Heaven."

Here is where we get to the purpose of the National Day of Prayer. On this day, many Christians will gather together in various locations across our nation to pray for our homes, families, schools, businesses, governments, and our whole world. Especially, we will pray for people in positions of authority that God will influence their decisions which in turn will impact the lives of others. As a result, our world will draw closer to the way God intends it to be. Even if we choose to pray by ourselves on the National Day of Prayer, we are aware that our personal prayers join with the personal prayers of many others across the nation which in turn collectively lifts our concerns before the throne of God. By faith, we can be sure that God hears and will answer the heartfelt prayers of God's people for our nation. Therefore, I invite you to take part in some way in this National Day of Prayer on May 4th. Your prayers will help unleash a godly force to affect our nation and our world.

Pastor Dennis

Providence Post is a newsletter of the Providence Presbyterian Church, 2401 Broad Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania, 814/944-7258. The *Post* is published monthly except for the July/August summer edition. Pastor: Dennis Braun; Editor: Barry E. Gaut. Website: www.providencepc-altoona.org



By Barb Hazlett

(Note: The following highlights are taken from the minutes of the Monday, April 17, 2023, regular Session meeting.)

Clerk's Report: Communion was served to 46 communicants on Maundy Thursday, April 6.

Carolyn Kendall passed away on Saturday, March 25, 2023.

Treasurer's Report: The treasurer's report was distributed and discussed.

Huntingdon Presbytery Report: Mark Leberfinger was our Session representative at the Saturday, March 25, Presbytery meeting. The next meeting of Presbytery will be on Saturday, April 22, and Mark will again represent Session.

Moderator's Report: Dr. Carole Parsons will be using the church for her students' piano recital on Friday, May 5.

Pastor Braun found a funeral pall (a cloth used for covering a casket during a funeral service) and asked Session what we should do with it. It was suggested that we place an announcement in the Huntingdon Presbytery newsletter.

The Session agreed to set a congregational meeting on Sunday, May 21, for the purpose of accepting Pastor Braun's retirement.

Session Team Reports (Chair)

Finance & Stewardship (Barry Gaut): Per Capita for 2023 has been established at \$39.24 per person, and based on 139 members, our per capita bill from Huntingdon Presbytery will be \$5,454.36, which we pay in four installments of \$1,363.59.

For the period ending on March 30, 2023, a total of

\$2,621.88 has been paid to our per capita fund. This represents a 48% response, or approximately 67 of our 139 members.

The 2023 vs. 2022 Monthly Financial Summary is summarized below:

	Through 03/30/23	Through 03/30/22
Congregational Giving	\$ 46,757	\$ 47,064
Building Rental Income	335	1,561
Special Offerings	1,941	2,735
Total Income	\$ 49,033	\$ 51,360
Total Expenses	\$ 59,538	\$ 55,880
Surplus (Shortfall)	\$ 10,505	\$ 4,520

Congregational Fellowship (Glenn Nelson): The covered dish dinner will be held on Sunday, May 7. Glenn will make an announcement that everyone is welcome, even if they are not able to bring a covered dish.

A request was made from the Worship Team to serve cake and drinks to celebrate Graduate's Sunday on June 4.

Tickets will be made available for the Altoona Curve game on Thursday, July 20.

Mission (Mark Leberfinger) : The committee finalized plans for their indoor/outdoor Soup on Saturday event.

Thanks were given for the anonymous donations of dog and cat food for the Food Pantry. Additional donations are still needed as there has been an increase in the use of the pantry.

Donations will be requested in early May for the Asian Christian Academy project.

This month we gave the following: Unified Mission, \$1,000; Altoona Domestic Abuse, \$500.

Outreach (Jane Yerty): The group finalized plans for the upcoming Yard Sale on Saturday, April 22. Proceeds from the sale will benefit Krislund scholarships for neighborhood children. Session approved special offerings as needed based on response and income from the Yard Sale.

The remaining Community Garden beds have been installed. We very much appreciate the labor given

by many members of our church family to accomplish this task in just two mornings. Open garden beds may be reserved by contacting Nancy Woormer. Garden workdays will be held at 9:00 am on the second Wednesday of each month, weather permitting. The first workday will be held on Wednesday, May 10.

The Community Library will be opening soon.

We decided to cancel the Parking Lot Party this year. Our plan is to alternate between the Yard Sale and Parking Lot Party each year.

Our committee discussed a ministry from the City and area churches to address blight in Altoona. After some discussion, our pastor will make an announcement for those interested in such a ministry as neighborhood projects arise.

Property (Geoff Geesey): There is a leak in the roof above the kitchen which will be repaired at a cost of \$1,500.

Worship (Ellie Herbster): Mark Leberfinger will be our liturgist for April; Gaylend Young will serve in this capacity for May.

Kudos to all for your work throughout the Lenten Season!

We will continue to say the Ecumenical Apostle's Creed and Lord's Prayer. Our committee has not heard any objection to this. Session approved this as a permanent change in our worship service.

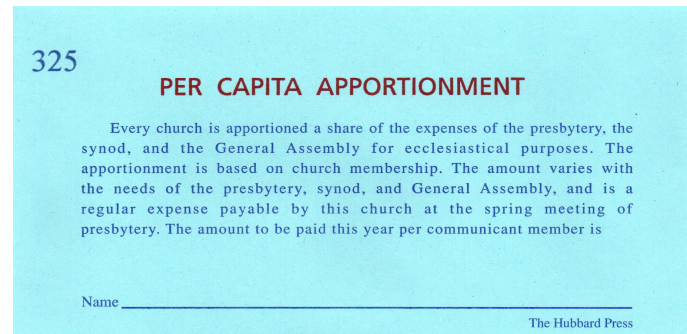
The Worship Team has discussed the organ update issue and will contact some people within the congregation to serve on the committee.

Looking Ahead:

The National Day of Prayer will be observed on Thursday, May 4. We will have flyers available on Sunday, April 30, for those who wish to participate from their home. Our church will be open from 10 am until 2:00 pm for anyone who would like to come in that day and pray. Someone from the Worship Team will be present during that time.

Pentecost Sunday will be observed on May 28. We discussed a birthday for the church, but will explore this further at our meeting in May.

Trinity Sunday, June 4, will be the first Sunday of our summer worship schedule. We also want to try having an outside service on that day. The summer schedule will continue through Sunday, September 3, 2023.



Per Capita Amount

Just a reminder that the Per Capita amount for 2023 is \$39.24 *per member*. So far this year, our response rate has been 48%. Please try to meet your per capita obligation early using the special [blue envelope](#) (like the one shown above) in your box of offering envelopes. Thank you!

May Donation Needs

Providence Presbyterian Church is collecting the following items for **Family Services** on the second Sunday of the month. Items should be left on the stairs leading to the bell tower in Fellowship Hall no later than Sunday, May 14, 2023. Thank You!

Category: Food Items

Canned ham, chicken, tuna
Rice, boxed potatoes
Cold cereal, instant oatmeal, grits
Mayo, ketchup, mustard, jelly
Snack foods
Cake mixes and icing
Individual snack bags
Microwave popcorn
Bottled water
Facial tissues

Watch for a new donation category in the June newsletter!

MAY

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Mae Stanek	2
Walter Betar	3
Dylan Hayford	6
Geoff Geesey	12
David Wisor	13
Carol Adams	14
Alyson Hollingsworth	14
Dave Carothers	17
Charyl Gardner	23
Al Holtzinger	23
John Gardner	24
Barb Hazlett	25
Lee Hite	26
Bob Hollingsworth	28
Carol McCracken	31

Russ & Martha Ramsey	1
Doug & Jess Adams	17
Les & Linda Hart	18
John & Debbie Mallow	23
Dave & Patsy Carothers	27



The congregation extends its heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends of **Carolyn Kendall**, who passed away on Saturday, March 25, 2023.

The National Day of Prayer is observed annually on the first Thursday in May. This one-day observance, designated by the United States Congress, asks people “to turn to God in prayer and meditation.” Providence Presbyterian Church will be open for prayer from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm, on Thursday, May 4. You are invited to use our sanctuary for prayer on that day.



Covered Dish Lunch: On Sunday, May 7, immediately following the morning worship service, the Fellowship Team will host a covered dish lunch. Everyone is welcome to bring a covered dish, hot or cold, and spend some time sharing food with your church friends. Drinks and place settings will be provided. For those that are able to bring a dish, a team member will be at the church at 9:00 am to accept your food.

Confirmation Class: A confirmation class for all youth in sixth grade and above will begin on Sunday, April 30, and run for five weeks, ending on Sunday, May 28. Youth wishing to join the church will be received into active membership on Youth Sunday, June 4. If you know any youth who would be interested, or if there are questions, please contact Pastor Braun.

Adult New Member Class: Any adult wishing to join the church should contact Pastor Braun and let him know of your interest. Adults wishing to join the church will be received into active membership on Pentecost Sunday, May 28.

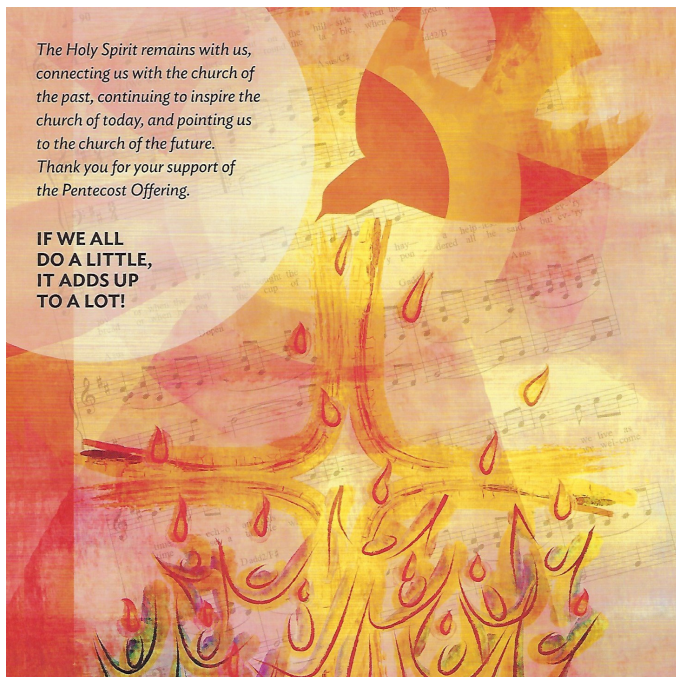
Summer Worship Schedule: Providence Presbyterian Church will change the time of its morning worship service to 9:30 am from Sunday, June 4, through Sunday, September 3. There will be no Sunday School or Junior Church during the summer schedule, but the Nursery will be open and staffed.

The Little Food Pantry: The Food Pantry box, which is located outside the church on Broad Avenue, has been reopened. The pantry is available for all to use as needed, or for those who would like to make contributions. Information about the Food Pantry and a list of suggested donation items may be found on colored flyers located on the heaters at the rear of the sanctuary.

Vacation Bible School: Save the date for this year’s program—Sunday, August 6, through Thursday, August 10, 2023. At **Stellar** VBS, kids discover how they can shine Jesus’ love and hope in everyday life. We hope to see you there!

The Holy Spirit remains with us, connecting us with the church of the past, continuing to inspire the church of today, and pointing us to the church of the future. Thank you for your support of the Pentecost Offering.

IF WE ALL
DO A LITTLE,
IT ADDS UP
TO A LOT!



Pentecost Special Offering

Each year on Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the church. The Holy Spirit remains with us still, connecting us with *the church of the past*, continuing to inspire *the church of today*, and pointing us to *the church of the future*. Each year, this celebration is marked by receiving the Pentecost Offering which nurtures the faith of those who are the church to come.

Remember that congregations keep 40% of raised funds to initiate or support programs for young people in their communities.

The Pentecost Offering started in 1998; Presbyterians have raised more than \$16 million for ministries that benefit younger members of God's family. We believe we are called to do even more—to support and care for young people as they build a strong foundation of faith.

In addition to the 40% mentioned above, 25% goes to Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) experience. This money is used to train and equip volunteers to engage in mission around the world.

Another 25% supports ministries with youth, ages 12 to 18, and those called to accompany them. *The Senior Project* helps graduating seniors explore their next steps in faith.

Finally, 10% is used to support the "Educate a Child, Transform the World" national initiative, which was affirmed at the 221st General Assembly in 2014.

Thank you for your support of the Pentecost Offering for 2023!



Presbyterians in the Press

Suzanne Auker-Slep received the Volunteer of the Year award from the Blair County Chapter of the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees. Suzanne was recognized for serving others through the Mountain Lion Backpack Program, by delivering items to the Altoona Food Bank and to the Altoona Teen Shelter.

Jane Hite was an honoree at the WISE Women of Blair County 2023 Tribute Dinner at the Casino at Lakemont Park. Jane has supported the Altoona Symphony Orchestra and the Altoona Community Theatre and is the vice president of the Blair County Arts Foundation board of directors.

Suzanne and Jane's photos appeared in weekend editions of the *Altoona Mirror*. We offer our congratulations to both women!

Honor Your Mother

Anna Jarvis, the woman who first suggested a national day to honor mothers, had an incredible mother to honor. Her mom, Ann Reeves Jarvis (1832-1905), was a Sunday school teacher and activist who helped lower infant-mortality rates in Appalachia and promoted friendship among families of Civil War soldiers.

At a memorial service for her mother, Anna Jarvis distributed carnations—her mom's favorite flower—to attendees. Her idea to set apart one day each year for moms gained traction, and in 1914, President Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday of May Mother's Day. It was customary by then to wear white carnations in honor of departed mothers and red carnations to honor the living.

Of the white flowers, Jarvis said they "symbolize the truth, purity and broad-charity of mother love; its fragrance, her memory, and her prayers. The carnation does not drop its petals, but hugs them to its heart as it dies, and so, too, mothers hug their children to their hearts, their mother love never dying."