



# Providence Post

FEBRUARY 2026



## Lent 2026 – Discipleship Deep Dive

Discipleship is responding to Jesus' call, "Follow me!" Scholar and writer Dallas Willard defines discipleship as "the process of becoming who Jesus would be if he were you." Discipleship is a process of becoming a student or apprentice of Jesus, learning to do the things he did and become the kind of person he was.

Discipleship is foundational to the Christian life. We can't really call ourselves Christians if we do not commit to becoming Jesus' disciples. The word "Christian" occurs 3 times in the New Testament, while the word "disciple" occurs 269 times. Clearly discipleship is essential to being a Christian. So, how do we become disciples of Jesus? Discipleship is both an initial commitment and a lifelong pursuit. We won't fully mature as disciples until we meet Jesus face-to-face, but we can begin the process of becoming Jesus' disciples and make progress in spiritual maturity.

This Lent, we're going to do a deep dive into the topic of discipleship. I will be preaching a **sermon series** on the topic **as well as leading a study based upon the video series, "From the Inside Out"** at our Thursday morning Bible study at 11:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

In this class/sermon series, we'll explore the following questions:

- **What is Discipleship?**
- **What is Spiritual Formation?**
- **What is My Picture of God?**
- **What is My Picture of Myself?**
- **What is My Picture of the Gospel?**
- **How Do People Change?**
- **How Do I Follow Jesus?**

FROM OUR  
**PASTOR**



I hope this series will help us learn about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, as well as how to grow to maturity as Jesus' disciples. Let's learn how to follow Jesus more closely as his disciples this Lenten season and always!

Blessings,

*Pastor Hilary*



## Session Highlights

By Barb Hazlett

*(Note: The following highlights are taken from the minutes of the Monday, January 19, 2026, regular Session meeting.)*

BJ Crownover was given permission to do a fun activity for Mother's Day. She suggested that everyone in the congregation bring in a picture from their childhood. The picture would be placed anonymously in an envelope, and we will have a contest to see if people could match the pictures to the congregation as they appear now. The prize will be a \$50 Sheetz gift card.

**Clerk's Report:** Sixty-two communicants were served on Sunday, January 4, 2026.

Joanne Helsel passed away on Friday, December 19, 2025. John Mallow passed away on Monday, December 22, 2025. Dewey Adams passed away on Sunday, January 4, 2026.

We received a letter from First Presbyterian Church of Johnstown transferring the membership of Carla Davis to Providence Presbyterian Church.

Pastor Hilary sent the congregation a thank-you card for the Christmas gift given to her by Providence Church. *[A copy of her note appears on the last page of this newsletter.]*

The following officers of Session were elected for 2026: Barb Hazlett was elected as clerk of Session and secretary; Barry Gaut was elected as treasurer; and Rick Herbster was elected as president. The secretary, treasurer and president's offices represent the church as a corporation.

**Treasurer's Report:** The treasurer's report was distributed and discussed by the Session.

**Huntingdon Presbytery Report:** The Huntingdon Presbytery met on Saturday, January 24, 2026, at

the State College Presbyterian Church. The meeting will also be available by Zoom. Pastor Hilary will be in attendance.

**Nominating Committee:** Kathy Rutter and Sue Whitsel will serve as ruling elders from Session on the 2026 Nominating Committee.

**Moderator's Report:** Pastor Livingston gave the Session a report on her work in the church for the past month. She will be taking vacation time from Tuesday, April 7, through Thursday, April 9, and on Saturday, June 20, and Sunday, June 21, 2026.

### Session Team Reports (Chair)

**Finance & Stewardship (Sue Whitsel):** Our per capita for 2026 will remain at \$41.00 per member. The breakdown is \$27.76 for the Presbytery; \$2.40 for the Synod of the Trinity; and \$10.84 for the General Assembly.

The 2025 vs 2024 Monthly Financial Summary is summarized below:

	Through 12/30/25	Through 12/30/24
Congregational Giving	\$183,893	\$200,045
Building Rental Income	51,272	20,494
Special Offerings	11,494	17,049
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$246,659</b>	<b>\$237,588</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$377,075</b>	<b>\$231,813</b>
<b>Surplus (Shortfall)</b>	<b>\$130,416</b>	<b>\$ 5,775</b>

**Congregational Care (Kathy Rutter):** The schedules were updated for cards/flowers/transportation for the months of January and February. Directory changes will be made after Session reviews the rolls.

Cheryl Gardner will organize the Birthday Cake project for 2026. Our first delivery of cakes to the Presbyterian Village at Hollidaysburg will be in April.

The next round of visitations/communion for our homebound members is scheduled with Pastor Livingston in February.

The "Blue Christmas" service was held on Monday, December 22, in our sanctuary. In addition to the congregants who were able to attend the service in person, several folks took the "take home"

packets. Another “Wednesday Wellness” will be scheduled for the spring and led by Pastor Hilary.

The Congregational Care summary was submitted for the church’s 2025 Annual Report.

Our team will recognize 50-year members on Sunday, May 3, 2026. There are ten congregants who have reached this distinguished milestone. Gail Irwin will chair the event.

Linda McKee will order palm crowns and lead the workshop for palm crosses on Friday, March 27, at 10:00 am.

Due to the increase in cost and the reduction in usage, our team decided to change *The Upper Room* devotional order, dropping the small print version entirely and getting 15 copies of the large print edition. We will continue to get the *Our Daily Bread* devotional in the small print version.

**Congregational Fellowship (Amanda Yeager):** Our next coffee fellowship will be held on Sunday, February 1, and will feature a baked potato bar.

Kathy Rutter asked if we would partner with the Congregational Care team to celebrate our new 50-year members on Sunday, May 3. We will coordinate plans at a later meeting.

There will be no coffee fellowship on April 5, due to that date being Easter Sunday.

**Mission (Judy Hartzell):** We served 47 guests a delicious Christmas meal, which everyone enjoyed! Live music provided by the Wopsononock Winds created a festive mood.

There were 36 people in attendance at the Soup on Saturday event on January 17. The menu included sauerkraut and hot dogs, mashed potatoes, soups, fruit, dessert and beverage. The February SOS menu will include a meatball sandwich, soup, fruit, dessert and beverage. Betsy Gallace will continue to place an invitation to our Soup on Saturday events in the St. Vincent pantry food boxes on Thursdays.

Before Christmas, essential repairs were made to our outdoor “little pantry;” some hardware was replaced and the pantry cabinet was repainted. This pantry is over three years old now and this is the first time repairs were required.

Pastor Hilary reported that we will reduce the “special offerings” from four to three per year: One Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion, and Christmas Joy. We will review this in detail after the pastor receives more information.

We decided to prepare soup for the “Families United for Change” organization fundraiser. This organization assists in setting up a home for those coming out of recovery. It makes the lifesaving NARCAN available to users and provides clothing and personal items for women coming out of recovery two times a year. The group has built and maintains a little contemplation park, located at Tuckahoe Park, for use by those whose loved ones have lost their lives due to addiction.

January 2026 Giving Report: Unified Mission - \$1,000, and World Mission - \$500.

In February, we suggest repeating the January category of canned soup and saltines or crackers for the Altoona Food Bank. Donations of any non-perishable food items are also appreciated.

For our Food Pantry, we are requesting donations of any non-perishable food items and especially personal care items like toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, lotions, socks, mittens, etc. No glass containers, please. Jane Falco fills the pantry twice a day, and it is usually emptied just as often.

Amanda Yeager showed us a brochure for “Run for the Son,” which is a Christian Motorcyclists Association fundraiser. She asked for permission to have a special offering to support their fundraiser. It was suggested that we look at the brochure and the organization and give Amanda an answer next month.

**Outreach (Jane Yerty):** The team prepared five Visitor bags to hand out during the morning worship service and re-evaluated which items to include in the bags. We also discussed using a welcome table for visitors to approach without pressure.

Pastor Hilary will develop a checklist for liturgists to help everyone to remember to get a name tag and to talk about the Visitor table. The suggestion was made to include pew attendance records on both ends of the pews.

Our Clothing Giveaway will be held on Saturday,

September 12, 2026. We will ask church families to separate, bag and label donations. For example, this bag has "men's clothing size large." We are grateful for the bounty of donations, but find the sorting process overwhelming and very time consuming. For those donating just a couple of items, we will have labeled boxes or totes available.

The Toy Giveaway will be held on Saturday, December 12, 2026.

The team brought up the idea of some education for the church family on how to be welcoming to visitors without being overwhelming. More to come.

We are continuing to collect items monthly for Family Services and are very thankful for the generosity of our church family.

We have been contacted by an educator from Penn State Altoona who would like to bring a class to our community garden in the spring to work with us. Mike and Deb McClain will contact him to discuss some options.

**Personnel (Dan Slep):** Personnel reviews will take place in the fall.

**Property (Bruce Hazlett):** There were three major repairs that were recently completed: exterior church painting; replacement of the outside office stairs; and replacement of the 25<sup>th</sup> Street side handicap access ramp. The steps on the 24<sup>th</sup> Street side of the church and the parking lot concrete barriers need replaced. We also need to look at remodeling the wall between the sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall.

**Spiritual Enhancement (Heather Wisor):** Our team is assembling Birthday Boxes with items donated from the congregation. About five boxes will be donated to the Altoona Food Bank each month.

Our youth director, Megan Burchfield, received the theme for this year's Vacation Bible School. A meeting with VBS volunteers will be scheduled for February or March.

A movie night is tentatively planned for Friday, February 13. Two movies will be shown, one for each age group of kids.

The youth are also planning another pancake breakfast, which is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, March 15, 2026.

**Worship (Rick Herbster):** Rick thanked everyone for their help throughout Advent, Christmas and Epiphany Sunday.

We discussed our winter cancellations process and the email that will go out. We will look over our membership to see how many people do not have email addresses.

We felt that the Christmas tree we have needed to be replaced. Michael's had a 7½-foot Jackson Spruce tree with a sale price of \$243.79. Steve and Carole Parsons have generously offered to pay for this tree.

Carole Parsons will check on Easter flowers at the nursery and find out prices and times that we have to place an order.

**Worship Services/Lenten Schedule for 2026:**

February 1 - Communion/Mary Morrow will fill the pulpit (Pastor Hilary will be on vacation)

February 15 - Transfiguration of the Lord/ Annual Meeting following the morning worship service

February 18 - Ash Wednesday

March 29 - Palm Sunday

April 2 - Maundy Thursday, communion

April 5 - Easter Sunday

April 12 - Cafe Humor Sunday

May 24 - Day of Pentecost (Memorial Day weekend)

May 31 - Trinity Sunday

Pastor Livingston will check with the other Presbyterian churches regarding a Good Friday service.

**Giving and Serving Opportunities:** Pastor Hilary listed the opportunities that will go out to the congregation as a bulletin insert on the last Sunday of the month. Session reviewed the list.

**New Business:** The City of Altoona will be hosting a delegation from our sister city in St. Poltin, Austria, from Tuesday, March 24, through Wednesday, April 1, 2026. They are looking for families to host a couple of the students in the delegation. Pastor

Hilary will make that announcement.

We have leadership manuals from 2019. Pastor Livingston distributed them to the Session and asked them to have their teams look over the sections to consider updating them.

## Per Capita Amount

Just a reminder that the Per Capita amount for 2026 remains at \$41.00 *per member*. Please try to meet your per capita obligation using the special **blue** envelope in your box of offering envelopes.

The Finance and Stewardship Team would like to thank those of you who have responded so generously to our 2026 stewardship campaign. It's not too late to turn in your estimate of giving card if you have not yet done so. You may call the church office for an additional estimate of giving card if you need one.

## FEBRUARY Birthdays

Freddie Stanek	1
Laighla Wisor	1
Brad Slep	5
Milo Payne	6
Lee Fagley	7
Carol Gillespie	8
Russell Ramsey	8
Brad Settle	15
Richie Slep	16
B.J. Crownover	22
Sammy Zeigler	28

## 2026 Session Members

(Note: To the right of each Session member's name is the team that they are serving on.)

### Class of 2026

Sue Whitsel	Finance & Stewardship
Jane Yerty	Outreach
Rick Herbster	Worship

### Class of 2027

Bruce Hazlett	Property
Heather Wisor	Spiritual Enhancement
Amanda Yeager	Congregational Fellowship

### Class of 2028

Dan Slep	Personnel
Judy Hartzell	Mission
Kathy Rutter	Congregational Care

## February Donation Needs

Providence Presbyterian Church is collecting the following items for **Family Services** on the second Sunday of the month. Items may be left on the designated shelves located in the 24<sup>th</sup> Street hallway adjacent to the Fellowship Hall no later than Sunday, February 8, 2026. Thank You!

### Category: Paper Products & Medications

A+D® Diaper Rash Cream  
Vicks VapoRub®  
Neosporin®  
Pepto Bismol™  
Toilet Paper  
Paper towels  
Facial tissues  
Disinfect Wipes

## Annual Congregational Meeting

Don't forget to make a note on your calendar to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting that will be held on **Sunday, February 15, 2026**, immediately following the morning worship service at approximately 11:30 am. Copies of the church's annual report for 2025 will be distributed prior to this meeting.



**2026 Church Flowers:** If you would like to remember loved ones or a special event, please sign the **2026 Flower Calendar** located in the 24<sup>th</sup> Street hallway, adjacent to the Fellowship Hall. The cost is fifty dollars (\$50) for two vases.

**Inclement Weather:** In the event of inclement weather, before venturing out, please check your email and/or the church's Facebook page or website for any scheduled changes or cancellations.

**Vacation Time:** Pastor Livingston will be on vacation from Monday, January 26, through Monday, February 2, 2026. Mary Morrow will be filling the pulpit on Sunday, February 1.

**Lights and Locks:** Our church needs volunteers to open and lock up the church on Sunday mornings. A sign-up sheet is provided in our Fellowship Hall.

**Ash Wednesday:** There will be an Ash Wednesday service on February 18, 2026, at 6:00 pm, in our sanctuary. This will be a brief time of worship and prayer with the imposition of ashes. The service will be about 30 minutes in length. All are welcome to attend!



*Dear Providence Presbyterian Church,*

*Thank you so much for the generous Christmas gift you gave me. Thank you for all you do for our church. I'm so blessed to be your pastor! Looking forward to ministry with you in the new year.*

*Blessings,  
Pastor Hilary*



The congregation extends its heartfelt sympathies to the family and friends of the following members at Providence Presbyterian Church:

**Joanne Helsel**, who passed away on Friday, December 19, 2025.

**John F. Mallow**, who passed away on Monday, December 22, 2025. John is survived by his wife Deborah and daughters Jennifer and Megan.

**Duane E. 'Dewey' Adams**, who passed away on Sunday, January 4, 2026, at UPMC Altoona. Duane is survived by his wife Jane Carothers and children Ian and Sarah Adams.



Fort Roberdeau Executive Director **Glenn Nelson** was on the front page of the January 24-25, 2026, edition of the *Altoona Mirror*. He was leading the Pledge of Allegiance during the America 250PA kickoff event at the Blair County Courthouse.



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