

Providence Post



NOVEMBER 2026

'Tis the Season…To Give Thanks!

Dear Providence Presbyterian Church members & friends,

In the month of November, we celebrate Thanksgiving…a time when we enjoy the seasonal favorites of turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and of course, pumpkin pie! More importantly, Thanksgiving is an opportunity to remember all God's blessings that He has given us. We have much to be thankful for here at Providence Presbyterian Church. The Lord has blessed us with a beautiful facility in which to worship and serve our community, financial resources to sustain our ministry, and dedicated, hard-working staff that keep everything running smoothly.

The biggest blessing we have is…all of you! Each and every one of you is a gift to this congregation. You give so generously of your time, your gifts, your leadership, your service, and your showing up each week for worship. This church continues to thrive as a witness for Christ in our community because you all have responded to God's call to be part of the life and work of this congregation. We couldn't be here without you! So, thank you for being a part of our church! Thank you for all you do to invest in the worship, ministry, and service of our church!

As we remember God's blessings in our lives and in our church, we are called to give generously to continue the ministry God has been doing in our congregation and broader community. We're in a season of stewardship where we are asking you to consider your financial commitment to our church for the coming year. Your gifts not only support our regular operating expenses, but they also fund important building maintenance projects that keep our facility safe and beautiful, as well as ministry initiatives that serve our members, friends, and broader community. Your gifts empower us to do all we are called to do here at Providence Presbyterian Church, and we are grateful for them! Please prayerfully consider your financial commitment for 2027 and **return your pledge cards to us by November 8, 2026.**

I also want to give a word of personal thanks to all of you for celebrating the special milestone of my "Silver Ordiversary" – the 25th anniversary of my ordination to the ministry. From the bottom of my heart, I thank all of you for the beautiful recognition and reception, and all the hard work and creativity that went into the event. It was truly special to me, and I'm so honored to be your pastor!

I also want to give a special thanks to our organist, Carol McCracken. I know she doesn't like a fuss…but I did want to recognize her service and her sharing her musical gifts with us over the years. Carol will be retiring at the end of the calendar year, and we wish her all the best. We will be seeking a new organist, and we ask for your prayers that God will bring the right individual to us to fill this important role.

Lastly, we have a unique opportunity to join with other congregations and members of the community in an **Interfaith Thanksgiving service, hosted by our friends at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church (344 Baynton Ave, Lakemont) on Thursday, November 19th at 7:00 PM.** I will be participating in the service, along with other interfaith leaders. Please join us for this special opportunity to give thanks together and foster positive relationships in our broader community.

Thanks for being part of Providence Presbyterian Church!

With gratitude,

Pastor Hilary

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

1 Thessalonians 5:18



Session Highlights

by Barb Hazlett

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

Clerk's Report: Seventy-three communicants received communion on World Communion Sunday, October 4.

The Session minutes books were audited on Wednesday, October 7, and our book was found to be in good order without exception.

Session needs to approve the 2027 budget at our next meeting so that it may be presented to the congregation at our annual meeting which, according to our by-laws, needs to be held on the third Sunday in November. Since Session meets on the third Monday of the month, that would make our Session meeting take place the day after the congregational meeting. Therefore, we moved to change our congregation meeting to the fourth Sunday in November (November 22) for this year only.

Since the date for our December Session meeting would occur only four days before Christmas, another motion was approved to move the December meeting to the second Monday, which would be December 14.

Treasurer's Report: The treasurer's report was reviewed and discussed. A preliminary copy of the 2027 church budget was distributed and explained by our treasurer, Barry Gaut.

Huntingdon Presbytery Report: There will be a meeting of Huntingdon Presbytery on Saturday, October 24, at 10:00 am, at the Petersburg Bethel Church. The meeting will be in-person only.

Nominating Committee Report: Rick Herbster and Sue Whitsel have agreed to serve another three-year term on Session. Deb McClain has agreed to serve on Session. Gail Irwin, Brian Rutter and Jon Yerty have agreed to be on the 2027 Nominating Committee. This group will be presented to the congregation for election at our annual congregational meeting on November 22.

Moderator's Report: Pastor Hilary listed all her activities for the previous month.

Our church has been invited to join an interfaith Thanksgiving service at St. John's Catholic Church on Thursday, November 19. Pastor Hilary will get more information on this special service.

Session Team Reports (Chair)

Finance & Stewardship (Sue Whitsel): The per capita rate for 2027 will remain the same as it was for 2026: $41.00 per individual member of the church. Based on our membership of 137 as of December 31, 2025, our annual per capita bill will be $5,617.00, which is payable in four quarterly installments of $1,404.25.

Materials for the 2027 stewardship program have been given to our office administrator for mailing or distribution (for those who have a mailbox) at the church. Individuals pledging to the church have been instructed to return their Estimate of Giving cards on or before Stewardship Sunday, November 8, 2026. Sue Whitsel delivered a Minute for Stewardship on Sunday, October 4.

The 2026 vs. 2025 Monthly Financial Summary is summarized below:

	Through 09/30/26	Through 09/30/25
Congregational Giving	$139,090	$130,052
Building Rental Income	442	(*)51,242
Special Offerings	7,215	7,649
Total Income	$146,747	$188,943
Total Expenses	$238,425	$265,130
Surplus (Shortfall)	$ 61,678	$ 76,187

(*)Includes a $25,000 donation for exterior painting in August 2025

"Session Worksheets" for the new budget were distributed at the September Session meeting. Thus far, most of the completed worksheets have been returned. The committee has plugged in numbers for the coming year and a preliminary

copy of the expense side of our 2027 budget was distributed and discussed under the treasurer's report. At our next Finance and Stewardship meeting on Thursday, November 12, our committee will develop numbers for the income side, and the entire budget will be distributed for approval at the November Session meeting.

Congregational Care (Kathy Rutter): The schedules were updated for cards/flowers/transportation for the months of October and November. The fall mailing list was reviewed.

The next scheduled delivery of homemade cakes from our congregation to the Presbyterian Village at Hollidaysburg will be on Friday, October 30. Three congregants have volunteered to bake and have contacted Charyl Gardner to organize delivery.

Communion and visits for our homebound members were scheduled for November.

Buddy Bags containing treats and personal care items were assembled at the October meeting. These bags are for our homebound members and ten bags have already been delivered.

Our team reviewed the December calendar to plan for the holiday projects. Pastor Hilary will once again offer a Blue Christmas program sometime in December.

Congregational Fellowship (Amanda Yeager): Our traditional Advent Dinner will be held on Sunday, December 6, the Second Sunday of Advent.

Mission (Judy Hartzell) : Jane Falco's grant application for our outdoor food pantry to the Synod of the Trinity was denied since the effort was intended to encourage new projects and not to sustain existing ones. She will apply once again to Huntingdon Presbytery for their grant money. Jane is thinking that she will stagger the times that she fills the pantry so that people who stop by later in the day will have more food available.

The World Communion Sunday offering ended on Sunday, October 4. The total amount collected was $658.00.

We served 40 guests at the October 17, Soup on Saturday event. The meal included hot dogs and sauerkraut, choice of three soups, apples, desserts and beverage. Seconds were served after 12:30 pm, and there were enough leftovers to send a little of everything to the Family Services Teen Shelter. Thanks to all who helped in any way!

For the November Soup on Saturday, we will be serving meatball sandwiches, a choice of three soups, bananas, desserts and beverages. For the December SOS, we are planning on using the leftovers from our Advent Dinner.

October mission giving includes the Altoona Food Bank and the Healing Patch Community.

November donations include the Altoona Food Bank: boxed or canned Thanksgiving sides, such as stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, etc. For the Providence outdoor food pantry: nonperishable food items and personal care items, and especially fall/winter items like socks, mittens, hats, scarves, etc., for kids and adults.

Outreach (Jane Yerty): The team reviewed the recent Clothing Giveaway, evaluating what positives we utilized to continue next year and suggested improvements.

The Community Garden and Community Library will close at the end of October. A workday to be held on Saturday, October 17, at 1:00 pm.

Visitor bags and postcards are still available for use by all groups. We are looking to highlight using postcards to invite friends in November.

We reviewed current expenses and projected budget amounts for 2027. Our recommendations were forwarded to the Finance team.

The Toy Giveaway will be held on Saturday, December 12, at 10:00 am. Setup for this event will be in the Fellowship Hall starting on Sunday evening, December 6, and continuing throughout the week. Watch for additional information in the bulletin and newsletter as we approach the date of the Giveaway. *[See the related article in this issue.]*

Property (Bruce Hazlett): We contacted Patterson Concrete and we think that we have found the source of water coming into the church basement and a way to solve the problem. There are some large cracks in the cement at the front of our church building and around the corner toward the steps on the parking lot side. The cost to repair

these will be $5,580. This will be a job for next year because Patterson is already booked through the end of this year's construction season.

The air conditioner in Kimberly's office is no longer working. She said that she has money in her budget to replace it. We gave her the measurements and she will find one that she likes.

There was a question about placing a handle on the sanctuary side of the new sliding doors and Bruce will check into that. Bruce will also look into the timer for the outside security light.

Worship (Rick Herbster): Acolytes, ushers and liturgists are in place for October.

We need to check that the church sound system is coordinating with the IT system. Also, we will talk to Jim Burchfield and ask for suggestions regarding the sound. Carol McCracken asked that we wait until after the prelude to close the new sliding doors to the sanctuary.

The Worship team discussed our 2027 budget worksheet and decided to leave everything as it was last year.

We discussed the salary range and job requirements for the organist position. We will check on the job description already in place so that we can review it and then give our findings to the Personnel team.

Calendar Highlights (All dates are on a Sunday unless otherwise noted.):

October 25 - Reformation Sunday
November 1 - "All Saints' Day" Sunday; Daylight Savings Time ends; Communion will be observed
November 8 - Stewardship Sunday; Turn in "Estimate of Giving" cards
November 22 - Christ the King Sunday
November 28 - "Dress the Church" Saturday from 9:00 am until 11:00 am
November 29 - First Sunday of Advent; Advent reading with families lighting the candles will begin
December 6 - Second Sunday of Advent; Communion & Advent Dinner
December 20 - "Blue Christmas" service at a time to be determined
December 24 - Christmas Eve (Thursday)
December 27 - Café Church & Christmas Carol Sing
January 3, 2027 - Epiphany Sunday; Communion
January 10 - Baptism of the Lord Sunday
February 7 - Transfiguration of the Lord
February 10 - Ash Wednesday
February 14 - First Sunday in Lent

Rick has spoken with Doug Stephens about speakers for the Fellowship Hall. This project will cost about $2,000 and there is a line item in the 2027 Property committee budget that would cover this expense.

It was suggested that the rear doors on both sides of the sanctuary be closed after the service starts to prevent drafts.

November Calendar Review:

All Saints Day - Sunday, November 1
Election Day - Tuesday, November 3
Stewardship Sunday - November 8
Interfaith Service - Thursday, November 19
Soup on Saturday - November 21
Decorate the church - Saturday, Nov. 28
First Sunday in Advent - November 29

Giving and Serving Opportunities: The list will be on an insert in the November 1, worship bulletin.

Old Business: We had a very successful first day of the basement cleanout. There are still a few things that need to be thrown away and there's still old sound equipment that needs to be discarded. We will take care of this by creating a few small groups to do the jobs and revisit it in January.

We sent letters to a few folks regarding our review of the rolls. George Greiner would like to remain on the active list. Matthew and Sharon Judd would like to be moved to the Friends list. We did not get a response from Wanda Davis, Charlotte Hall, Devany Laratonda, Betsy Smith, Wesley Thompson and Sonya Zeigler, so they will also be moved to the Friends list.



Family Services
November Donation Needs

Providence Presbyterian Church is collecting the following items for Family Services on the second Sunday in November. Items may be left on the designated shelves located in the 24th Street hallway adjacent to the Fellowship Hall by Sunday, November 8, 2026. Thank you for your support!

Category: Household Items

Blankets/sheet sets - twin size
Pillows & pillow cases
Towels & washcloths
Dish cloths & towels
Bathroom rugs
Facial tissues
Turkey, ham & side dishes
for a Thanksgiving dinner
Gift cards for grocery stores

Watch for a new donation category in December!

Advent Dinner

The 2026 Advent dinner will be held on Sunday, December 6, immediately following the morning worship service. Please consider joining us to celebrate the Christmas season. You can make reservations until Sunday, November 22, on the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall. This will be the last day to place your name and number attending the dinner. A delicious meal will be prepared that you'll want to enjoy with your church family. There is no charge for the dinner, but a donation basket will be provided. Hope to see you there!

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Editor: Barry E. Gaut.
Church Website: www.providencepc-altoona.org

NOVEMBER
Birthdays & Anniversaries

Bret Hayford	5
Skyler Zeigler	5
Delainey Wisor	9
Carole Parsons	9
Micah Yerty	13
Sue Whitsel	14
Gaylend Young	15
Teegan Brogan	17
Izzy Burchfield	18
Mike Larrimore	18
Jeanie Mollica	18
Elaine Bender	18
Marcia Dravis	21
Ian Adams	25

Dick & Elaine Bender	11
Brad & Sandy Settle	21
Allen & Bobbie Gibboney	26
Dutch & Donna Yeisley	26



North Pole Toy Giveaway

Our church is once again hosting a USED and NEW toy drive in preparation for a "North Pole Giveaway" to provide parents/caregivers an opportunity to select toys/books. Last year, we provided approximately 600 gifts to over 100 families that attended the event. To provide this giveaway, we are asking for donations of gently used or new toys. Suggestions for toys by age group are listed below. See the "Toy Giving Guidelines" on the next page for more details.

Younger Children: Baby dolls, cars/trucks, pretend play toys
Older Children: Art/craft or science kits, Lego® toys, sports balls, keychains/ fidgets, card games

(Continued on the next page)

Donation Drop-off Schedule/Volunteer Opportunities:

The following days and times will be available for individuals to drop-off donations and assist with setup and cleaning. Individuals, families, or community groups can sign up to volunteer along with our church members. We are also looking for volunteers for the event to assist with gift wrapping and assisting attendees. A volunteer sign-up sheet is available in our Fellowship Hall. Volunteers are asked to bring in tape dispensers (not disposable) if they have them.

- Sunday, 12/6, from 5 - 7 pm (drop off and cleaning)
- Monday, 12/7, from 9 am - 12 pm (drop off and cleaning)
- Tuesday, 12/8, from 6 - 7:30 pm (drop off and cleaning)
- Wednesday, 12/9, from 9 - 11 am (cleaning and organizing only)
- Thursday, 12/10, from 6 - 7:30 pm (cleaning and organizing only)
- Friday, 12/11, from 9 am - 12 pm (if needed)
- Saturday, 12/12, at 10 am, North Pole Giveaway event

Toy Giving Guidelines:

• All toys should be new or used toys that are unbroken, not rusted, and in good condition.
• Games and puzzles should be complete and have all pieces. Please place games/puzzles in Ziploc or grocery bag so that the pieces will not get lost.
• Dolls should have all parts. Place doll clothes and accessories in a plastic bag and secure them with the doll.
• Electronics should be in working condition. Batteries do not have to be included.
• Bicycles, tricycles, and riding toys should be in working condition.
• Sports equipment such as bowling or golfing sets should be boxed or placed in a sealed plastic bag.
• No guns, spears, or swords will be accepted.
• All books should in new or good condition. No tears in pages/covers nor stains.
• Clothing and food will not be accepted.

Any questions, please contact: Janelle Yerty, 814-934-1209, Janelle.yerty@gmail.com



Stewardship: It's that time of year when your Session is working on a new budget for 2027. Your pledge to the church helps us greatly as we create a new spending plan. A big "Thank You" to those of you who have already turned in your estimate of giving card. For those who have not yet turned in their card, please remember to do so on or before Stewardship Sunday on November 8, 2026. If you need one, call the church office at 814-944-7258.

Coffee Fellowship: A reminder to stay following our morning worship service on Sunday, November 1, for coffee fellowship in our Fellowship Hall. We will be enjoying some fall treats including pies and pumpkin goodies.

Advent Sermon Series & Study—The Advent Tree: Our Advent series this year will be based on the book *The Advent Tree* by Kara Eidson.

"Inspired by the centuries-old Jesse Tree tradition, Pastor Kara Eidson presents forty Scriptures from across the Bible to explore how Jesus, his family, and followers were shaped by all that had come before—the epic story of God and God's people —and how we, too, are part of God's story as followers of Christ today. Inside the book, you'll find weekly themes with discussion questions for group use as well as family devotions."

If interested, you can order the book using the following link:

https://www.wjkbooks.com/bookproduct/0664269311-the-advent-tree/

If you can't afford a copy, please see Pastor Hilary to purchase you a copy.

To go deeper, join us for discussion and a video series at our Thursday morning Bible study at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. Questions? See Pastor Hilary.