

**PENNSBURG UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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*Address Service Requested*

**January 2025**

**Worship with PUCC every Sunday Morning at 10:30 a.m.**

Worship services are streamed with Facebook Live (<https://www.facebook.com/pennsburgucc>)

**Pennsburg United Church of Christ mission statement:**

We are a welcoming congregation that celebrates and shares God’s unconditional love with each other, the community and the world.



**Consistory Officers & Employees:**

**Rev. Steven Myren**

**Cell #267 575-6773 Email - [pennucc.pastor@gmail.com](mailto:pennucc.pastor@gmail.com)**

President..... Paula Sell

Vice President.....Jane Bernhard

Treasurer.....Sharon Burns

Secretary ..... Holly Lash

Organists: ..... Michael Huffman & Ernest Yeagley

Custodian.....Lynn Sturdevant

Admin Assist.....Wendy Smedley [pennsburgucc@gmail.com](mailto:pennsburgucc@gmail.com)



## **From the Pastor,**

Below is a poem to put a new year into perspective:

### **Promise - Jackie Kay**

Remember, the time of year  
when the future appears  
like a blank sheet of paper,  
a clean calendar, a new chance.

On thick white snow  
you vow fresh footprints  
then watch them go  
with the wind's hearty gust.

Fill your glass. Here's tae us.

Promises made to be broken, made to last.

**Agape,  
Pastor Steve**

### **“Defining Our Present”**

So far in our Defining Our Present program, PUCG has identified the following **Core Values** of our congregation:

*We value being together in a safe, supportive Christian Family of agape*

*We value our close-knit church family and desire to invite others to join us*

*We value the acceptance of people where they are*

*We value a strong work ethic*

*We value being a part of our greater community*

*We value helping others through kindness and generosity*

On Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup> we will gather following 10:30 Worship for a pot-luck meal and further discussion of our Core Values. This time, we will identify the core values we hold that define the following areas of our life together:

## **Christian Education and Families, Youth & Children**

Children's Activities

Sunday School

Youth Group

Vacation Bible School

More adult education

Strong appreciation of youth

Prioritizing Christian Education and Youth

## **Worship**

Pastor's messages – down to earth, easy to understand  
& follow, meaningful

Renew the Choir

Open greeting up to all members

Relaxed worship atmosphere

## **Property & Finance**

Building improvements/revitalization/face-lift of the interior  
to make more inviting

Improve atmosphere

Feel more modern/fresh

Update

Remove dividers in Miller Hall

Cosmetic updates

Replace the white board the projector sits on

Increased contributions

Giving financially/time/talents

## **Growth**

Events to bring our community in

Get non-active members involved

Stable minister – in progress

Reaching out to the community

Become a Growing Church

Remain welcoming

Accepting of change and outside ideas

Known and recognized in the community

We do not necessarily want to “become” anything new but continue our core

values in a way that helps us grow into a larger community.

Please join us as we continue to define who we are as the people of God at  
Pennsburg UCC!

**From Consistory**

*Thank you!*

*Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your  
Consistory President for the last two years.  
Hopefully I've been able to give the Consistory the  
direction it needed to serve the church and its  
congregation. Truthfully I am surrounded by a  
Consistory filled with hard-working and dedicated  
members, which also truly reflects upon all of you,  
the congregation of PUCC. We're on a journey*

*to see a better future for the church and it will take all of us to uplift each other and help all of us to get there. As Pastor Steve has been guiding us this past year, reflect and remember who we were, but don't lose sight of the future and who and what we want PUCC to be. Have a blessed year and best of luck for the 2025 Consistory.*

*Respectfully,*

*Scott Mest*

### **Keeping Our Pastor**

Consistory is working on calling Pastor Steve as PUCC's Called Pastor. We need to complete our long profile – the profile is nearly finished (it needs some historical perspective, updated numbers, and a thorough read-through). The profile committee members include Wendy Smedley, Holly

Lash, Kathy Badman, and Alyssa Solt. Since December 31 is technically the end of Pastor Steve's original 2-year contracted tenure here at Pucc, Consistory voted at December's meeting to extend his contract on an ongoing basis until such time as the profile is completed, submitted to Conference for review and accepted, and we as a Congregation meet and vote to call him.

## **Annual Committee Reports are Due**

Attention all church committees! Your annual 2024 reports are due to the Administrative Assistant (Wendy Smedley) no later than *January 24, 2025* so that they can be printed in the February newsletter.

## **American Red Cross Blood Drive**

Pennsburg UCC is hosting a Red Cross blood drive on Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup> from 2 to 7 pm. What better way to share the love after Valentine's Day...and the gift of life...than by donating blood at our upcoming blood drive. There are plenty of time-slots available, but hurry, they will fill up fast! Scheduling a donation is easy. If you want to donate, you can visit the Red Cross website at [redcrossblood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org) and enter our sponsor code "Pennsburg UCC" in the 'Find a Blood Drive' search box, then select your preferred time and donation type (regular donation or Power Red). Please consider donating...your donation could help save a life.

**Give blood. Help save lives.**

**January Consistory Conversation:** After worship on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, please stay for a few minutes of conversation with our Consistory members as we keep you up-to-date on the latest PUCG news.

On Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, Consistory met and elected new officers for 2025. Our leaders in 2025 are:

***President: Paula Sell***

***Vice President: Jane Bernhard***

***Secretary: Holly Lash***

***Treasurer/Financial Secretary: Sharon Burns***

Wendy Smedley will continue in her position as our Admin.

This was also the first meeting for our two new Consistory members, Holly Lash and Charlene Heinrichs. We also gave thanks to Wendy Smedley and Scott Mest, our outgoing Consistory members. Thank you to those called into leadership positions at PUCC for your dedication and guidance.

The remaining 2025 Consistory Members are:

Dana Heimbach  
Lori Kern  
Gail Schmoyer

Pastor Steve will be on vacation from December 26, 2024 to January 3, 2025. During this time he is not traveling but chilling at home, so he is available if a need for pastoral care arises.

Please make sure to have your **2024 Annual Reports** in to the Church Office by January 12<sup>th</sup> so they can be included in the February Newsletter. Thank you.

Starting in January, please find a display rack containing a variety of **homemade cards** to send to family and friends. They are being provided by Robin Myren, who is a demonstrator for Stamping Up and owns her own card-making business, Songbird Designs. Cost per card is \$5. There will be a basket to pay for your cards by the display; All proceeds will go to PUCC's General Fund. Thank you to Robin for making this fundraiser possible!

### **Pennsburg UCC's Good Samaritan Program**

The Good Samaritan Program at Pennsburg UCC will help people in financial need who come to the church seeking assistance. Following are the guidelines for the program:

*The program will provide financial assistance to members and referrals from congregational members.*



*Depending on the situation, we will help pay bills or provide gift cards for gas and food.*

*Gift Card limits:*

*\$50 Gas Cards*

*\$200 Grocery Cards depending on family size*

*Families will be eligible to be helped once every six months, up to two times a year.*

*The program will be supported by a Good Samaritan Special Offering, which will be received on the third Sunday of every month.*

*Recipients will be determined at the discretion of the Pastor and Consistory President.*

*The program will be overseen by Consistory through the Caring and Sharing Committee. Records of income and expenditures will be maintained by the Church Treasurer.*

*Confidentiality will be maintained.*

## *Worship in January*

Don't forget that on January 5<sup>th</sup> we return to a **worship time of 10:30 AM**. We will celebrate worship at 10:30 AM through April **EXCEPT FOR** Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, when our worship service will start at 9:00 AM so that Pastor Steve can attend the Annual Meeting at St. John's.

This year the *coming of the Wise Men* will be celebrated on **Epiphany Sunday**, January 5, 2025. The service will feature a **Musical Communion Service**. Following the service, we will take down and store the **Christmas Decorations** for the year. Please join us!

## ***Thank you to our Poinsettia Sponsors this Christmas:***

Kathy Badman, in memory of Esther & Russell Badman

Sharon & Bob Burns, in memory of loved ones and in honor of family

Sherry & John Haas, in memory of loved ones

Dana & Bob Heimbach, in memory of family and friends

Holly, Irv, Aidan, Caleb, Brody and Derek Lash, in memory of Clarence & Helen Mensch and Irvin & Nancy Lash

Mary Jane & Tom May, in memory of loved ones

Wendy Smedley, in memory of Craig Smedley and Clarence & Helen Mensch

DeeDee Smith, in memory of my husband Bobby

Ginny and Bud Wisler, in memory of our parents

## *Code Blue Shelter Update*

The Code Blue Shelter is up and running on the nights when the temperature drops below 32 degrees. However, they are still looking for volunteers. Each evening requires a team of ten volunteers, working in four shifts. The shifts are:

8:00 PM – 11:00 PM	Intake of guests
11:00 PM – 2:00 AM	Overnight #1
2:00 AM – 5:00 AM	Overnight #2
5:00 AM – 8:00 AM	Breakfast & Clean-up

All volunteers are required to complete the Upper Perk Homelessness Coalition Code Blue Volunteer Registration Form, preferably through the Open Link Website. Volunteers will also need to complete a Pennsylvania volunteer background check and participate in one Code Blue Training Session.

More information about each of the four Volunteer Shifts and Volunteer Forms are posted on the bulletin board in the church back entryway. If you have any questions, please talk to Pasto Steve and PLEASE consider volunteering to help, if you are able.

## Are You Found Here: Meetings in December

11:30 AM, Sunday, January 5 <sup>th</sup> :	Fellowship Committee
7 PM, Tuesday, January 7 <sup>th</sup> :	Outreach & Growth Committee
11 AM, Wednesday, January 8 <sup>th</sup> :	Worship Committee
6:45 PM, Monday, January 13 <sup>th</sup> :	Executive Committee
7:30 PM, Tuesday, January 14 <sup>th</sup> :	Christian Education Committee
11:30 AM, Sunday, January 19 <sup>th</sup> :	Defining Our Present Gathering & Pot-luck
6:30 PM, Monday, January 20 <sup>th</sup> :	Consistory
10 AM, Sunday, January 26 <sup>th</sup> :	Consistory Conversation



Please remember PUCC's 2024 – 2025 **Confirmation Class** in your prayers. Members of our class are:

*Aubrey and Addie Conrad, daughters of Adam Conrad*  
*Magdalena Bitterman, daughter of Bill and Betty Bitterman*  
*Rory Butler, son of Jana and Greg Butler*  
*Grace Cleary, daughter of Suzanne & Michael Cleary*

Confirmation families are currently setting dates for our meetings in January. Please keep our youth in your prayers.

**Youth News:** Following a busy December which included presenting the Youth Christmas Program, December's Youth Gathering and an Overnight and Escape Room trip, PUCC's youth will gather in January from 6 PM to 7:30 PM at church on Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup> for **January's Youth Gathering**.

*Youth are encouraged to attend all our events and bring their friends!*

Youth from Pre-school to the fifth grade are invited to go downstairs for **Sunday School** following Children's Chat on Sunday mornings. Parents can pick their kids up downstairs following worship. If you would like to teach or assist in Sunday School, please talk to one of our current staff members. Thank you.

### **Quarters for Sheep & Chicks through Heifer Project International**

For much of her day, Budhini Hansda tends to the vegetables on her family's small plot of land in Odisha, India. Together with her husband, she uses buckets and bowls to irrigate the green stalks growing in neat rows, taking great care in shepherding their crops from seedling to healthy plant to harvest.

"On our 1-acre land, we cultivate eggplant, cauliflower, beans, chili, pumpkins, okra, cabbage and spinach according to the season," said Budhini, who received training on farming practices from Heifer Project India. Since then, she improved the quantity and quality of her garden's yield, most of which she sells at the local market and some she keeps for her family's consumption.

A smallholder farmer is a producer who rears livestock, raises fish or cultivates crops on a limited scale: In the developing world, a smallholder farm is a family-owned enterprise operating on up to 24 acres, with most smallholder farmers cultivating less than 5 acres of land.

A smallholder farmer is often characterized as a family farmer since many rely on relatives' labor to meet production needs, and they typically retain a portion of their harvest for household consumption. Smallholder farmers, sometimes referred to as "small-scale farmers," include farmers who own the land they work and those who do not.

The Hansda's are just one of the estimated 500 million smallholder farming households worldwide, a cohort of agriculturalists amounting to more than 2 billion people.

Heifer International believes ending poverty and hunger begins with agriculture, and smallholder farmers are at the heart of this effort. With the

right knowledge, tools and inputs, farming families like the Hansda's can earn a sustainable living income and supply their communities with nutritious food.

In December, we filled our Heifer Project container with quarters and purchased our first Sheep and Flock of Chickens of the new Sunday School Year!

On Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup> during Children's Chat our youth will go out into the congregation to receive this month's ***Quarters for Sheep and Chicks Offering***. Please bring the quarters you've collected over this past month with you and help provide sheep and chicks for those in need. Thank You!



Please join us starting at 6 PM on Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup> for a new Fellowship Event: **Pizza, Pokemon & Games**. The Outreach & Growth Committee will provide Pizza and Drinks for supper if you would like to bring snack food to share. Our youth are invited to bring their Pokemon Cards to trade and play. Games for all ages will be played, if you would like to bring your favorite board and card games. This event is open to our community, so please bring your friends, neighbors, co-workers and family!

On Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, Pennsburg UCC is going to an **Allentown Phantom's Hockey Game**. The puck will drop at 7:05 PM. Cost is \$30. In January please sign-up in the church entryway. We have reserved a limited number of tickets, so sign up soon and remember: at PUCC no one gets left out because of finances. If you need confidential assistance in paying for your tickets, please talk to Pastor Steve.

Please contact DeeDee Smith (215-679-9350) to activate **PUCC's Prayer Chain**.



Please remember the following in your prayers:

*Friends and family of Lydia Maurer, Sharon Urban, Betty Althouse, Grace Grubb, and Tony Batzel*

*Joan Butler  
Lori Hawkins  
Deb Royer  
Julia & Family  
Dan Engdahl*

*Betty Heimbach  
Tom & Mary Jane May  
Kerry Goodwin  
Rich McNeeley  
Mila Smith*

*Marie Sell  
Ginny Wisler  
Jamie McCarthy  
Bonnie Frank  
Carol Huff*

### **Thank you to.....**

Dennis Hess, for decorating the outdoor cross for Christmas  
Dennis Hess, for making our new Sheep & Chicks Quarter Container  
Those doing work around the church property and building  
Everyone who donated to December's Quarters for Sheep & Flocks Offering  
December's Sunday School Staff  
PUCC's Youth Leaders  
This year's Poinsettia Sponsors  
Everyone who helped with worship in Advent & Christmas  
DeeDee Smith, for coordinating our Prayer Chain



COMMUNITY DINNER

The **First Monday Meal** at Pennsburg UCC will be served by the St. John's Lutheran Church on January 6th and their menu is:

Pork and Sauerkraut  
Mashed Potatoes  
Green Beans  
Dessert  
Drink

# January 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNSDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>December 29</b>  9 AM Worship & Sunday School	30	31	<b>January 1</b>  <b>Happy New Year!</b>	2	3  <i>Pastor's Vacation Ends</i>	4
<b>Epiphany</b>  10:30 AM Communion Service & Sunday School  11:30 AM Take Down Decorations  11:30 AM Fellowship Committee	6  First Monday Meal	7  7 PM Outreach & Growth Committee	8  9 AM – 2 PM Pastor Steve Office Hours  11 AM Worship Committee	9	10	11
12  10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School  6 PM Youth Gathering	13  6:45 PM Executive Council	14  7:30 PM Christian Education Committee	15  9 AM – 2 PM Pastor Steve Office Hours	16	17	18
19  10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School  11:30 AM Defining Our Present Conversation & Pot-luck	20  6:30 PM Consistory	21	22  9 AM – 2 PM Pastor Steve Office Hours	23	24  6 PM – 8 PM Pizza, Pokemon & Games	25
26  <b>9 AM</b> Worship & Sunday School  10 AM Consistory Conversation	27	28	29  9 AM – 2 PM Pastor Steve Office Hours	30	31	<b>February 1</b>
2  10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School	3  First Monday Meal Sponsored by PUCC	4	5  9 AM – 2 PM Pastor Steve Office Hours	6	7	8