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PASTOR’S COLUMN

REV. DR. ROBERT COOK *Interim Pastor*

Creating a Church Safety and Security Program at GPC

Safety and security and church are now a serious issue for every congregation. This is something that we cannot afford to ignore. It is important for us to protect our people while we preserve the mission of the church. And we need to do this with integrity within the guidelines of what it means to be an active Presbyterian Church preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We want to be ready for emergencies that may be typical as well as those that might be very rare. It is not uncommon to experience medical emergencies during a service or other times of the week. Having a team in place to begin to address the situation and call in the necessary help is part of our safety and security vision. We want to be prepared for things like fire emergencies. They may never come, but we want to be prepared. We want to be ready for issues in the building where there may be places that need attention for, they may be unsafe for older people or younger people or anybody. Care for the physical building is an important task. And also looking at places in the building that would be vulnerable and be subject to a break-in, or where the safety of our people would be at risk, in the event of a security threat. These areas and more are a part of the task of a safety and security program.

Fortunately, it is very rare for an active shooter to appear in a worship

service. We pray it never happens, but we know from time to time it does happen. At least educating the congregation for the options of what to do should such an extreme emergency arise is essential. Failing to do so could result in a tragedy.

I think it's appropriate for us to understand that God entrusts us with the safety and care for our people. In the garden of Eden story, Adam and Eve were entrusted with caring for the garden, tilling it, but also guarding over it, they failed in keeping out the serpent as they dropped their guard.

We always see references the shepherds are watching their flocks in many places in the Bible. A shepherd watches over their flock, and cares for them making sure that any danger is met and overcome.

In the Old Testament book of Nehemiah, as he built the wall of Jerusalem, he not only posted guards at the gates, but the stone workers were prepared for emergencies as well. Everybody was well trained for what they needed to do when perilous situations arose.

We have a mission to care for and protect our church community, while holding to a vision of gracious hospitality, providing for worship that moves, blesses and heals the soul; generous outreach to our greater community and holding the traditions and the principal teachings of the Presbyterian Church USA.

We will soon be gathering a team with at least three different functions for building issues, medical emergencies, and extreme emergencies. We don't want to focus only on an active shooter

situation. It is unlikely but still we need to be prepared. We will not encourage people to arm themselves or carry a gun into the facility at any time. The Presbytery does not encourage that. Gun ownership is serious business and not to be taken lightly. Rather, our goal is to have plans for the more common emergencies that we may experience so when they come, then we have the knowledge of what to do and we have people in place to carry out the important tasks of doing them.

Being prepared and taking our responsibility to care for the congregation as gatekeepers and protectors is foundational in putting together a church security and safety program.

We will be gathering a team of people to serve in various areas for this program, then meeting in January to lay the groundwork for our work. Your support in this is vital because this is a ministry of the church and taking it seriously will help us to have an effective program in place that serves the best interests of the Greencastle Presbyterian Church family.

If you have an interest in being a part of our church security program, we would welcome that and please let me know. We need people with the medical skills, common sense knowledge, with what to do with in emergencies. We are looking for those with medical, EMT skills, fire prevention and firefighting skills and "ALICE" training. Over the course of the year, we hope to share our plans and implement the safety and security program with the approval of the Session. Stay tuned and please support this effort to make sure everyone is protected at GPC.



CLERK'S REPORT

JENNIFER ROBERTSON *Clerk of Session*

**GREENCASTLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
REGULAR SESSION MEETING
Thursday, November 13, 2025
in the Social Room beginning at 6:30 pm**

The meeting was opened with the lighting of the candle.

RULING ELDERS PRESENT: Anne Larew, JoAnne Lewis, Carole Malin, Racheal Marconi Bowman, Dee Patton, Phil Pearce

Absent: Mary Ann Ackerman, Jenn Robertson

Secretary Pro Tem: JoAnne Lewis

The Moderator was Pastor Robert Cook.

Ruling Elder Racheal Marconi Bowman offered a devotion and a prayer.

Session welcomed Debbie Young to the Session Meeting, per her request, to share a personal matter.

Clerk's Report: ACTIONS: Approved minutes of October 9, 2025, Regular Session meeting. Approved minutes of the October 26, 2025, Special Called Session Meeting.

Recorded the death of George William "Bill" Thorne on October 31, 2025.

Church Roll through October 31, 2025 is 147.

Worship attendance on November 2, 2025, was 105 with Communion celebrated by 98.

Additionally, 21 joined the worship service via livestream.

Jenn Robertson attended the Company of Clerks Meeting on October 21, 2025.

ACTION. Approved Clerk's Report.

Financial Report	October 2025
Beginning Balance	\$29,040.21
Receipts	\$15,723.79
Disbursements	\$26,045.82
Ending Balance.....	\$18,718.18

ACTION. Approved the October Financial Reports.

Virtual Motions: AFFIRMED THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS: Approved recruiting and hiring a temporary Bookkeeper to perform essential finance responsibilities for an unknown period. Hourly rate of pay to be determined by market. Approved the use of Sanctuary by the Cumberland Valley School of Music for recitals on Sunday, November 16, 2025, from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, program from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm. (Jim Papa will open and close the church.) Approved Special Called Session Meeting for Sunday, October 26, 2025, at 11:20 am following Worship.

Special Events: ACTION: Approved Advent Pot Luck Luncheon on Sunday, December 7, 2025, following worship service.

Property and Maintenance: ACTION: Approved fall cleanup for church and Moss Spring Graveyard on Saturday, November 15, 2025.

Pastor's Report: ACTION: Approved the creation of a Safety Committee. Will officiate over the Memorial Service for Dr. G. William Thorne on Saturday, November 15, 2025 at 1:00 pm with a reception to follow in the Social Room.

The meeting was closed in prayer by Pastor Bob and with The Lord's Prayer in unison at 7:40 pm.

WORSHIP

ANNE LAREW *Moderator*

Happy Christmastide! The Worship Committee thanks all of you for attending, singing and praying to God during our Advent season. Thank you to Fred Davison and all the talented musicians who have blessed us with the glorious sounds of the season. We are also grateful for our liturgists, communion servers, greeters and tech support.

Please take note, Session has decided to schedule the January Communion for Sunday, January 11, *The Baptism of the Lord*.

The Committee will be taking down the decorations in the sanctuary on Tuesday, Jan 6, 2026 at 6:30 pm at our monthly meeting. Feel free to join us as many hands make light work.

BOARD OF DEACONS

DEBRA E. MILLER *Co-moderator*

The Board of Deacons did not meet in December; however, Deacons were communicating with their Care Cell members.

We prayerfully reflect on these highlights from the past month:

- Connecting with those in our care cells by word, cards, and deeds.
- Diligence of our prayer ministry.
- Mailing grief materials that may offer comfort to families during their time of bereavement.
- Deacons provided Dunkin breakfast sandwiches, coffee and donuts for the volunteers preparing Thanksgiving meals.
- Christmas cards which included the 2025 Holiday schedule were mailed to members.
- Presenting Chancel flowers, December 7, 2025. One bouquet was given to Sue Thompson, and one bouquet was given to Patricia Stepler, Music Director, of Penn State Mont Alto Chorale.
- Deacons will be hosting Coffee and Fellowship on December 21, 2025.
- A proposed 2026 Deacon Budget was presented to Finance for review.

We look forward to serving by:

- Offering home communion to our shut-ins.
- Hosting Coffee and Fellowship in January.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 6:30pm.

We encourage you to contact your Deacon to share your thoughts, concerns, and ways we can serve you as well as reporting any change of address, phone numbers, and email addresses. We ask for your prayers as we serve GPC.



SPECIAL EVENTS

DEE PATTON *Moderator*

The Special Events Committee of Becky Sucke, Deb Miller, Sue Thompson, Dee Patton, and honorary member, JoAnn Lewis hosted a wonderful Advent Luncheon after worship on December 7. Ham was provided and the congregation provided delicious sides and desserts. There were 37 in attendance. Everyone left with a wooden ornament.

The committee's next planned event will be at Easter.

Why is Per Capita Important?

Per capita provides the Office of the General Assembly with the means to strengthen the connections of our work, and build lasting relationships to help all Presbyterians share God's love through mission and ministry.

The 2026 Per Capita assessment includes

\$11.26 for the General Assembly

\$2.40 for the Synod of the Trinity

\$21.00 for the Presbytery of Carlisle.

TOTAL PER MEMBER \$34.66



GREENCASTLE-ANTRIM FOOD PANTRY

717-597-8333 ext. 2

gafoodpantry@gmail.com

Thursday,
January 8
6:00 to 8:00 pm

**NOTE THIS
CHANGE DUE TO
NEW YEAR'S DAY**

Wednesday, Jan. 14 & 21
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

CURRENT FOOD NEEDS

CEREAL

PASTA SAUCE IN CANS OR
PLASTIC

RICE MIXES

PASTA MIXES

BAKED BEANS

CANNED FRUIT

Any non-perishable food items
are greatly appreciated.

Call or email to schedule
a time to drop off
the food donations.

***THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT OF THE
FOOD PANTRY!***



G-ACWF's ***Morning of Christmas Music*** musicians:
The Marimba Trio – Roger Myers, Jill Work, and Marlin Barnes;
Dave & Anna Lee Kopp, *vocal duet*; Linda Shade, *organist*;
Sherry Tressler *soloist*; Ami Myers, *GPC Video/Audio Tech*

GREENCASTLE-ANTRIM CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 9:30 am
Greencastle Evangelical Lutheran Church

"New Year's Celebration!"

Join us for refreshments,
fellowship, and an inspiring
"start of the year"

Devotion, Sharing, Prayer, and Lots of Singing!

- No reservation necessary
- Lunch optional
- Free-will offering accepted

***All are welcome to attend
and bring a friend!***

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

RACHEAL MARCONI BOWMAN Moderator

KERI PAPA Acting Director

COLLEEN SEIDEL Youth Group Leader

Our next committee meeting is
on Tuesday, January 6th @ 6:30 pm

Thank you to everyone who signed up to help in the Sunday School classroom this Fall. We are currently filling spots for the new year. Our prayer is that you will consider helping us. The children are a blessing and our future.

THANK YOU... for helping us serve over 200 Thanksgiving Meals, collect over 30 OCC boxes and over 100 Angel Tree Gifts. What a blessing our congregation is to children both near and far. We appreciate your continued support of these programs. We were thankful to partner with St Mark's to fulfill our Angel Tree Wishlists this year.

COMMUNITY CAMP 2026 Our theme next year will be Rainforest Falls by Group Publishing. *Step through the mist into Rainforest Falls, overflowing with wild waterfalls, towering trees, and colorful creatures. Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, kids plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God. They'll explore what it means to be rooted in a relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life's storms.*

Planning will begin this month for our Summer Camp 2026. Help us make it the best one yet! There is a job for everyone, no matter your strengths. If you are interested in being a part of this awesome week, please join us at the CE meeting. We will discuss camp at the beginning in case you choose not to stay for the entire meeting. Please see Rachael or Keri with questions.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Caroling & Cocoa Event. We had almost 20 people join us. We were happy to visit some of our longstanding GPC members.



YOUTH GROUP News

Q: German and English soldiers sang this traditional religious hymn during the Christmas Truce of 1914 during World War I. The Youth Group celebrated the season with a rousing game of Christmas Jeopardy during its Christmas party this month. The kids were competitive and impressive with their knowledge of Christmas trivia; the boys eeked out a close victory with the correct answer to the Final Jeopardy question! A: What is "Silent Night"?

Youth Group begins 2026 with its first meeting on Sunday, January 4 at 5:30 pm. A Parent Meeting will be held that evening at 6:30 pm in the Social Room. At least one parent of any youth who is participating or interested in participating in Youth Group this spring is asked to attend. Reach out to Colleen Seidel at gpc.youth17225@gmail.com with any questions!



**Good and gracious God,
we surrender all worries and concerns
to you, knowing that we are
your beloved children. Our faith compels
that we rest in your infinite mercies.**

June Marshall health concerns

Patti Sechrist health concerns (*Marcie Tinninis*)

Alan Shope health concerns

Tim Walck health concerns

Mindy Grosh health concerns (*Dick & Donna Grosh's daughter-in-law*)

Michael Paylor complications from leg amputation (*cousin of Weslie Johnson*)

Kathy Kendall health concerns (*Weslie Johnson*)

Dan Patton health concerns

Bethany Yeager missionary work in South America (*Scott Peterson & Candace Rutherford*)

Penny Mohler battling ovarian cancer (*Nancylee Moore*)

Cathy Thomas health concerns (*Beth Taylor's mother / submitted by Sheila Gates*)

Sue Lum, recovering from broken kneecap (*Fred Davison's sister*)

Frank & Tracey Toston health concerns (*Scott Peterson*)

Sally Snyder health concerns

Chelsea White diagnosed with breast cancer, mother of young twins (*Emily Johnson*)

Lynne Leap moderate dementia (*Barry Leap's mother*)

Gail Guyton diagnosed with brain tumor (*Diane Mills*)

Marvin & Nancy Rice health concerns (*Linda Thomas*)

David Myers health concerns (*Sue Myers*)

Kenny Reed cancer diagnosis

Todd Smith health concerns (*Marcie & Chuck Tinninis*)

John Stanton brain cancer (*co-worker of Scott Peterson*)

Leslie Moose (*Patsy Lee*)

Donna Bingaman health concerns (*Margery Benson*)

Jason Kinzer health concerns (*Deb Shank*)

Emmie White health concerns (*Jan Eppleman*)

Terri Brust health concerns (*Deb Shank*)

Helen Taulbee health concerns (*Polly Coulter's sister*)

David Pickart health concerns (*Margie Benson*)

Greg Harmon health concerns (*Sarah Harmon's husband*)

Bonnie Speaks health concerns

Cindy Widder health concerns (*Cindy Marconi*)

Donna & Sarah Stillwagon mental health concerns (*Barry Leap's family*)

Carla Vickers cancer/mastectomy (*Barry & Beverly Leap*)

Kevin Taulbee health concerns (*Polly Coulter's nephew*)

Brandon Fisher health concerns

Jan Eppleman health concerns

Cora Crider health concerns

Kim Tartaglia knee replacement

Bill Heacox health concerns (*Brian Rice*)

Lynn Anne Robertson Smith recovering from impaired neuronal communication syndrome (*Jenn Robertson*)

Missy Benson health concerns (*Margery Benson's sister-in-law*)

Joyce Baker surgery (*Margery Benson*)

Mary Bennet & family health concerns

Dave Wilson health concerns

Amanda Lain

Doug & Gladys Grane and family

Pat Grimes head injury from a fall (*Sue Miller*)

OUTREACH / MISSION

MARY ANN ACKERMAN *Moderator*

POLLY COULTER *Mission Committee Chair*

Happy, happy New Year to each and every one of you! We definitely could not have accomplished ALL of the wonderful things we did without your consistent love and support! We are so grateful that God brought us to Greencastle Presbyterian to become a part of this group of loving people.... Thank you!

We had a very successful Heritage Christmas on the Square in December. Thank you to everyone who donated the cider that warmed a lot of folks on those cold evenings. It was the smell of that fresh popcorn popping that really drew people to our booth on the corner. Much appreciation to everyone who braved the cold to help us man the booth and pass out the popcorn and cider. What a great outreach opportunity for the community and our location was perfect to just point out our church to people. It was great to be in partnership with other churches and organizations to celebrate the Christmas season. The committee thinks it's a must do each year moving forward.

Speaking of moving forward, April will be here soon and that means we will be reviewing Matthew Anderson Scholarship Applicants. If you know of someone graduating GA high school this year, encourage them to apply for this scholarship for review. College or trade schools are not cheap endeavors and any assistance helps.

This year the Outreach/Mission Committee hopes to continue our efforts in providing our help in our local community in many different ways. Some of those efforts will be through known established agencies we have supported for many years. We hope to let our church be reminded as to what these missions are all about as many of our members have changed through the years and may not be familiar with these agencies. We will be discussing the best way to make this happen in our January meeting. So, more to come on this.....

We are excited about our efforts in 2026, whether small or big, how we will be planting the seeds of

what is means to spread the good news of Jesus through our actions and efforts in the community. We will go out as the representatives of GPC reflecting Jesus's teaching in all we do. If you want to join in this important work with a fun group, our next meeting is January 13, 2026 at 6:30 p.m., see you there??





JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES



GPC

4 Beverly Leap

6 Karol Keller

8 Chelsea Johnston

9 Berry Kline

12 JoAnne Lewis

14 **David Rutherford & Carole Malin (42)**

18 Mindy Barnhart

18 Steve Dodds

18 Chris Johnston

19 Darlene Kline

21 Sally Snyder

21 Linda Tarr

22 Emily Johnson

23 Paige Widder

25 **Sean & Jordan Walck (1)**

27 Patti Divelbiss

29 **David & Evelyn Lindecamp (21)**





CHRISTMAS EVE 2025

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

MARY ANN ACKERMAN *Moderator*

As we look forward to a new year, the Nominating Committee members will begin to meet to pray and discern who from this congregation will be asked to serve as an Elder, Deacon, or a member of the Nominating Committee.

In the reference handbook for Elders, Deacons, Pastor Nominating Committee, and the Congregational Nominating Committee which was Session Approved, December, 2021 (4th rev) it says...

"One of the convictions we take seriously at GPC is that God cares deeply about what goes on in this congregation. The members of the congregational nominating committee may ask you to consider serving but it is really God who calls people to serve. The Congregational Nominating committee members are merely acting as servants who try to sense God's call for the church."

Pray about how you may become involved in the ministry and leadership here at GPC. Discern God's call in your life.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

SUE THOMPSON *Moderator*

All women are invited and welcome to attend the second Thursday of the month at 1:00 pm in the Edwards Room (September through June.) We meet for a brief business discussion followed by Bible study and conversation. Dedicated to strengthening the work and ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

Our next meeting is Thursday, January 8, 2026.

The Baptism of the Lord celebrated on January 11, marks the end of the Christmas season. It is notable because it marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry and confirms his identity as the Son of God.

Discover five things about the significance of this day and strengthen your own devotion.

1. Jesus was baptized by his kinsman, John.

According to Luke 1:36, John's mother, Elizabeth, was a relative of Mary, Jesus' mother. Because their pregnancies occurred at similar times, their sons' first interaction actually took place before they were born. When Mary went to see Elizabeth after learning she was to give birth to the Messiah, John leaped for joy from within his mother's womb.

Luke 1:41-43 states: *"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, 'Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.'"*

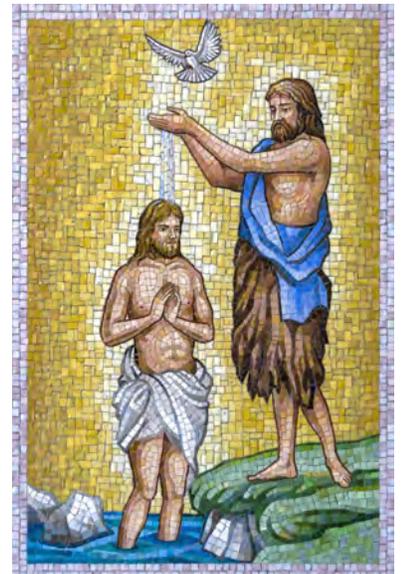
2. John did not initially want to baptize Jesus.

When Jesus came to John, John hesitated to baptize him, because his baptism was one of repentance. John understood that Jesus was the promised Messiah, who had nothing for which he needed to repent.

Matthew 3:13-14 states: *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?'"*

3. It was the first baptism performed for righteousness, not repentance.

Because He was born holy and lived a sinless life, Jesus had no need to be baptized. Yet He chose to do so in order to fulfill all righteousness.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 2026

Thur January 1
NEW YEAR'S DAY

Sun January 4

2nd SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Worship 10:00am followed by Coffee Fellowship
1st Sunday Food Drive

Tue January 6 **EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**
CHRISTIAN ED COMMITTEE MEETING 6:30pm
WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING 6:30pm

Wed January 7
Wednesday Prayer Circle 9:00am
Bell Choir 6:00pm
Chancel Choir 7:00pm
Ladies AA Meeting 7:00pm

Thur January 8
PRESBYTERIAN WOMENS GROUP 1:00pm
Greencastle-Antrim Food Pantry 6:00pm
SESSION MEETING 6:30pm

Sun January 11

BAPTISM OF THE LORD
Worship 10:00am with Communion
followed by Coffee Fellowship
Youth Group 5:30am

Tue January 13
MISSION COMMITTEE MEETING 6:30pm

Wed January 14
Greencastle-Antrim Food Pantry 9:00am
Wednesday Prayer Circle 9:00am
Bell Choir 6:00pm
Chancel Choir 7:00pm
Ladies AA Meeting 7:00pm

Thur January 15
DEACONS MEETING 6:30pm

Sun January 18

Worship 10:00am followed by Coffee Fellowship

Wed January 21
Greencastle-Antrim Food Pantry 9:00am
Wednesday Prayer Circle 9:00am
Bell Choir 6:00pm
Chancel Choir 7:00pm
Ladies AA Meeting 7:00pm

Sun January 25

Worship 10:00am followed by Coffee Fellowship
Dementia Caregivers 2:00pm
Youth Group 5:30am

Wed January 28
Wednesday Prayer Circle 9:00am
Bell Choir 6:00pm
Chancel Choir 7:00pm
Ladies AA Meeting 7:00pm



The Baptism of the LORD continued

Matthew 3:15 states: "Jesus said to him in reply, 'Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."

4. It is the first moment in the New Testament where all three Persons of the Trinity are clearly shown at the same time.

During the baptism of the Lord, Christ the Son was baptized while the Holy Spirit descended, and the Father spoke from the heavens. In this event, the Father and the Holy Spirit confirmed the deity of Christ, and Jesus submitted to his Father's will.

Matthew 3:16 relates: "After Jesus was baptized, He came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for Him], and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon Him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"

5. The Baptism of the Lord is documented in all Gospel accounts except John.

The story of Jesus' baptism can be found in three different places in the New Testament: Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, and Luke 3:21-22. Matthew's description of the event contains the most detail and is the only one that relates John's hesitance during the event.