

The Week of January 11, 2026

THE KISKI WEEKLY



From the Desk of Rev. Erin Kobs, Organizational Presbyter & Stated Clerk

As we continue our journey into the new year, the season after Epiphany invites us to pay attention & to watch for the ways God's light continues to shine in the world & in our lives. While the busyness of the holidays has faded, this quieter time offers space for reflection, renewal, & deeper listening. God's work does not end with Christmas; it unfolds daily, often in ways we might easily overlook.

In the Gospels, Jesus begins His ministry not with great fanfare, but by calling ordinary people in the midst of their everyday routines. Fishermen are invited to leave their nets, not because they are extraordinary, but because they are willing to listen & respond. This reminds us that God's call is not reserved for a select few. Rather, it reaches into our congregations, our communities, & our own lives, exactly where we are.

January can be a challenging season. The days are cold & dark, & many carry concerns about health, finances, relationships, or the uncertainty of the year ahead. Yet, it is precisely in these moments that God's light shines most clearly. The promise of Epiphany assures us that Christ is present, guiding our steps even when the path forward feels unclear.

As people of faith, we are called not only to receive this light, but to reflect it. Through acts of kindness, prayer, service, & faithful witness, we participate in God's ongoing work of hope & restoration. Each small act matters. Each prayer offered & hand extended becomes part of God's greater story.

May this week be a time of renewed trust in God's leading. May we find courage to follow where Christ calls, strength to support one another, & peace in knowing that God's grace is sufficient for every day. As we walk together into the weeks ahead, may we do so with hearts open to God's presence & lives shaped by Christ's love.

Grace and peace to you, now & always.

Blessings,

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Presbytery Upcoming Events

- January 15th: 12:00pm Registration closes for January Stated Gathering
- January 17th: 10:00am January Stated Presbytery Gathering at New Rehoboth-Greenville Church
- January 18th: Erin preaching at Union First; Angela visiting Grace
2:00pm Closing Service for Faith Church
- January 19th: 6:00pm Organization Commission
- January 21st - 24th: Erin at APCE Annual Event (Pittsburgh)

Good News Board

Have some good news to share? Email us at orgpresbyter@kiskipby.org

From Trinity: "Let all that you do be done in love." ❤️ (I Cor. 16:14). The sanctuary is overflowing with generosity! 🎁 ✨ Thank you to everyone who helped fill the Operation Christmas Child boxes. Your kindness will bless children across the globe this Christmas season. ❤️🌍



With special thanks to our Communities of Faith. We were able to create over 25 boxes with the money collected cross the three churches during our penny war over the summer (Shelocta Community & Crete Presbyterian Churches). A total of 132 boxes were delivered on November 24th to continue to their final destinations.

Rochester Mills put together 25 hygiene Kits for the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance & also 27 Shoeboxes for the Samaritan Purse.

Rwanda Partnership News

Our Rwanda Partnership will be celebrating it's 20th year in 2026. In honor of that, a fundraiser contest to purchase 10 motorcycles for pastors in Rwanda in order for them to get to their churches or visiting parishioners. Each motorcycle is \$2,000. The church who raises the most money per member (according to their 2024 statistical report) will win the Philippiian Prize (a gift from Rwanda). Raising only \$10 per member could just do it! Funds must be submitted to the Presbytery Office by **June 1, 2026**.

January Stated Gathering



Our first stated gathering for 2026 will be on Saturday, January 17th at 10:00am at New Rehoboth-Greenville Presbyterian Church (1419 Rehoboth Church Road, Clarion). This gathering will be a time of intentional worship, honoring those elders who've joined the church triumphant, installing our moderator & vice-moderator, along with other business of the presbytery.

To register for the gathering: [click here](#)

Registration will close on Thursday, January 15th at noon! This is to ensure the staff has enough time prepare for the gathering.

The packet & Zoom information will be emailed out to all registered participants on Thursday, January 15th during the afternoon.

Formation Commission News

- There will be Elder Training offered on Monday, January 26th at 6:00pm at the Plumville Church. If you are interested in attending, please [register here](#).
- We are offering a series of training specifically designed for current pulpit supply folks and/or elders that occasionally fill home church pulpits. These are designed to help folks better understand how to preach & give more understanding about the scriptures. The first 3 classes (see below) are a series on the elements of preaching: exegesis (history), sermon writing, & preaching. We are strongly urging you to take all three because the classes are sequential & build on each other.

All classes are from 9am to 2pm & are offered at the Presbytery office & via Zoom. There will be a light breakfast & lunch offered.

- Saturday, January 31st: Introduction to Biblical Exegesis
- Saturday, February 28th: Introduction to Sermon Writing
- Saturday, March 28th: Introduction to Preaching

Please [register here](#) for these classes. We are asking you to register by Wednesday, January 21st, so we can prepare for your attendance. If you have any questions, please contact Angela Cowser, Training Presbyter.

Upcoming Events Around Kiski



Edenburg invites all to join them for a community dinner on January 26th from 5:00pm to 7:00pm. Spaghetti & sides will be served as you fellowship with others around table. If attending, please RSVP to the church at 814-797-1167 by January 23rd.

Birthdays

Pastors with January birthdays:

- January 6th: John Hopkins (Grace)
- January 13th: Sarah Sedgwick (Edenburg); Tim Monroe (Retired)
- January 26th: Katelyn Hendrickson (At Large)

Job Postings

Calvary (Indiana) has two job openings: Director of Christian Education, and a Sexton/Evening Custodian. Full descriptions are available on our website: calvarychurchpa.com/jobs.

Interested applicants can email their inquiries to: officemanager@calvarychurchpa.com

Free Items

Plumville Church recently did a clean out day at the church. They are offering the following items free to a good home:

- Choir robes - 15 blue - 31 winter white
- Wooden Children's chairs - 3 different styles - 14
- Worship in Song Hymnals (old) - 52

If you are interested, please contact Colleen McFarland

Mandated Reporter Training

A reminder that the Book of Order does require that elders, ministers, & volunteers (Sunday school teachers, VBS workers, anyone who is working directly with children) every **36 months** (G-3.0106). This is a change from the past, when it was every 5 years, which is still the requirement for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Mandated Reporter training takes about an hour & a half. There is the option to do Zoom for these. The Zoom link will be emailed to all registered participants on **the day of the training**.

Upcoming:

- Saturday, February 7th, 10:00am, Beechwoods Church, [Register here](#)

If your church is interested in hosting a Mandated Reporter Training, please contact Erin Kobs, Organizational Presbyter & Stated Clerk (orgpresbyter@kiskipby.org)

Update from Syria & Lebanon

As the new year opens, life in Syria remains “fragile and uncertain” though there have been some political shifts with some calm in various areas of the country. But the new government appears weak and seems to be leaving many communities feeling out of the loop with regards to making any significant decisions. Christian churches and communities are living quietly and cautiously during these unsettling times. Recently there has been a bomb explosion in an Alawite mosque that killed many, demonstrations with casualties in the coastal communities, and the burning of Christmas trees by extremists. Most citizens of the country are facing extreme poverty, unemployment, and extreme lack of security. Many are fearing political volatility may return along with forced migration.

Churches continue to worship and serve their communities, providing food assistance and medical care along with educational opportunities and pastoral care, though much of this is implemented under heightened security. The Synod has ordained two new associate pastors in the Damascus and Homs churches within the past months. Ten days ago, a member of the Homs church was released from prison because he was never found guilty of any charges brought by the government.





Update from Syria & Lebanon

The church-related schools in northeast Syria, including those run by the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon churches in Qamishli and Hasekeh have been allowed to teach the government curriculum for another year as the Kurds are still campaigning for their own curriculum.

Most of the input we are receiving from Syrian sources indicate this as a very uneasy time because of lack of security. The portrayals are almost those of a wild west, vigilante-law kind of environment, some calling it like waiting for a “tsunami” swelling up on the horizon.

However, the most urgent need for our prayers and efforts is seen in Aleppo, where a current offensive led by the government has revealed a gap between the rhetoric of the new regime and reality. With the targeted communities defending themselves from the onslaught of heavy artillery, rocket fire and other munitions, these residential neighborhoods were deliberately subject to full-scale military attacks. Initially the human toll was devastating even in the early hours with reports of many civilians, including children, being injured or killed and mass displacement of families who were forced to leave their homes. With curfews imposed, these once vibrant streets have turned into ghost towns with only the echo of weapons explosions punctuating the neighborhoods. People have taken shelter in damp and dark basements and crowding into the halls of churches and monasteries. Mothers with their children are literally shivering with trauma, while the elderly live in fright and are forced to recall the worst memories of the last decade of war in their homeland. Nearly all of the Christian neighborhoods have been impacted, with one reporting that approximately 120 families have been fully displaced.

One report said, “Aleppo is being violated and we need the voice of reason to replace the sound of fire and a language that builds human dignity rather than extinguishes it.”

In Lebanon, their struggle continues amidst the gridlock with the various sectarian and political groups vying for power. The Christian presence has been hit hard by the impact of the economy, the exodus of those moving to other countries, and the volatility of security. A number of Christian areas have resisted the settlement of displaced populations from predominantly Shia regions, reflecting local tensions and fears of altering communal balances.

With cost of living still very high, Lebanon’s economy continues to slump, poverty is rampant, and the infrastructure remains dysfunctional on many levels. With Hezbollah still insisting on maintaining an armed presence and the threat of the Israeli Defense Forces very real and persistent, the country continues to grind against the resources and livelihood of all of its citizens.

We are happy to report that the Near East School of Theology, our partner in Lebanon, will be celebrating the first Online Class of Syrian Students in Theological Studies soon. This is an innovative program that will help build the church in the Middle East.

Israel’s military forces have recently intensified their offensive attacks in southern Lebanon, citing the threat of Hezbollah’s military. The international pressure on the government in Beirut to exert control to disarm Hezbollah has increased as Hezbollah has been mostly unwilling to take up discussions until the Israelis withdraw and greater security can be set in place. All this while the Lebanese government insists that Hezbollah has been demilitarized in the far south of Lebanon. Events in the area and the role of Iran in supporting armed proxies lean heavily on the desperation felt by the people and cast a large shadow over the present and what is to come.

On his recent visit to Lebanon, Pope Leo XIV challenged the political leadership in Lebanon to be true peacemakers and set their differences aside as he proclaimed a message of hope to reinforce the Christian churches in the Middle East. The percentage of the Christians in the country has continued to diminish and we need to continue to pray for their peace and security in this threatening time.

Please also pray for the team of SLPN members who will be traveling to the region to visit our partners. Pray for their safety and for God’s peace, patience, and contagious grace to accompany them all. Also please remember to hold up those who welcome them and their families who send them.



Presbytery Directory

Need to access the Directory? [Click here](#)

The directory is under password. If you need the password, call Cheryl at the office

Clerk of Session Corner

Here is important information for clerks of session of our congregations



Annual Statistical Reports

It is just about that season again! Information regarding your statistical report was sent out to clerks on Tuesday, December 2nd. The statistical portal for **clerks is now open & will close on Friday, February 20th**. If you do not have your church ID or PIN number, please email Erin at orgpresbyter@kiskipby.org.

2026 Terms of Call & Contracts

The 2026 Terms of Call & Contract forms are now in fillable PDFs on the [Kiski website](#). **All forms are due by January 30, 2026**. The original form must be mailed to the office - no scanned copies via email or photos will be accepted. After they are signed off by the Organization Commission, the original forms will be sent back to the church for your records.

2026 Minimum Terms of Call (as set at September 13th Stated Gathering)

- Without a manse - \$55,550
- With a manse - \$55,500 (\$42,692 salary & \$12,808 manse value)

2026 Per Capita Rates

Presbytery: \$27.00

Synod of the Trinity: \$2.40

General Assembly: \$11.26

Total: \$40.66

Remittance forms have been sent to all church treasurers. If you have not received it, please contact the office. A blank form is available on the [Kiski website](#).

2026 Board of Pensions Rates

Congregational Pastor Package

- Pastor only (required for installed pastors) - 17.5% of effective salary
- Additional optional coverage:
 - Pastor & spouse - 17.5% + \$12,250
 - Pastor & child(ren) - 17.5% + \$9,950
 - Pastor & family - 17.5% + \$22,200

Transitional Pastor Package

This is only available to those who were in the package in 2025 & this package will go away in 2028

- Pastor & family - 37% of effective salary

Church Financial Leadership

Church Financial Leadership Academy has 3 financial videos – good for sessions, auditors, and treasurers. They can be found at www.churchfla.org. These videos are between 5-6 minutes long & are very informative.

They are: Principles of Financial Reporting, Narrative Budgets, & Reading Church Financial Statements.

You will need to register in order to view the videos. Registration code is PCUSA.

There are also a lot of other useful information around finances available on their website.

Stewardship & Financial Resources

We are gauging interest in churches & sessions who might be interested in information & seminars regarding church stewardship, financial planning, or year end giving. Presbyterian Foundation offers a wide variety of resources & seminars. If we have interest, we will reach out to Rev. Ellie Johns-Kelly, who is our Ministry Resource Officer for the Foundation. If your church is interested, please send an email to kiski@kiskipby.org.