

The Week of January 4, 2026

THE KISKI WEEKLY



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

January 6th marks the celebration of Epiphany, a holy moment that invites us to linger in wonder. The story of the Magi, travelers from afar, guided by a star they did not fully understand, reminds us that God often meets us on the road, not when everything is clear, but when we are willing to seek, trust, & follow.

Epiphany speaks tenderly to pastors & church leaders, especially at the beginning of a new year. Many of us step into January carrying both gratitude & fatigue, hope & unanswered questions. We may be discerning next steps for our congregations, wrestling with uncertainty, or quietly wondering what faithfulness will look like in the months ahead. Into all of this, Epiphany proclaims a simple but profound truth: God's light goes before us.

The star did not remove the difficulty of the journey for the Magi. It did not explain every turn in the road. Yet it was enough to keep them moving forward. In the same way, Christ's light does not promise easy answers or quick solutions for the church, but it does promise presence. God is still being revealed in unexpected places, through faithful people, & often beyond the boundaries we might anticipate.

As a presbytery, we are invited in this season to reflect together on where we see that light emerging among us. It may be found in congregations faithfully serving their neighbors, in pastors walking patiently with their people, in moments of courage, compassion, & quiet perseverance. These are signs of Epiphany too - the holy glimpses of God at work in our shared life.

The Magi responded to what they encountered not with certainty, but with worship. They offered what they had, trusted what they had seen, & returned home changed. May that be our prayer as well, that we remain open to God's revealing, generous with our gifts, & willing to be transformed by the journey.

As this new year unfolds, may you be strengthened for ministry, encouraged in your calling, & reminded that you do not walk alone. May the light of Christ guide your steps, renew your spirit, & lead us forward together as the body of Christ in Kiskiminetas Presbytery.

Grace and peace to you in this season of Epiphany.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erin".

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[Kiski Presbytery](#)
[Synod of the Trinity](#)

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Presbytery Upcoming Events

- January 13th: Necrology Forms due to office
7:00pm Formation Commission
- 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: 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

- **Washington** hosted the annual Parish (Gilgal and Rochester Mills) Thanksgiving service with 56 people in attendance. The offering of \$396 went to ICCAP's food bank. The three Churches together with Plum Creek Church provided 30 Thanksgiving baskets for families in need in the Marion Center school district.
- **Appleby Manor's Presbyterian Men** held their 33rd Annual Train Display during the week of Thanksgiving. Thanks to the wonderful model train enthusiasts & their children, they raised over \$1,300 in donations & over 1,000 pounds of canned goods for the local Food Bank. They are looking forward to the 34th display next year over Thanksgiving.
- **Appleby Manor's Deacons** are collecting donations to purchase gifts for the residents of the Ridge at Heritage Meadows home in Ford City. Gifts will be delivered to the residents on December 21st after church lets out at approximately noon, while members of the church sing Christmas carols. Please come out & join us, the residents are so appreciative!!
- **Mt. Zion** prepared 7 Veteran boxes. They sent two to local men & the others will go to the veterans local housing.

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.

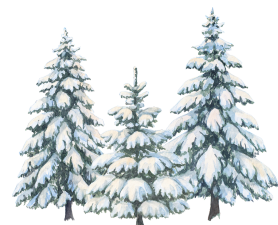
Ordination of Stephanie Backus

On Sunday afternoon, Stephanie Backus (pastor at Crete, Shelocta, & Trinity Churches) was ordained as a Minister of the Word & Sacrament. Her service was held in Hicks Chapel at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. It was a beautiful service filled with music, a moving sermon from Rev. Dr. Jerome Creach (Professor of Old Testament at the seminary), & two



thoughtful charges to Stephanie & to the congregations of Crete, Shelocta, & Trinity. There was a wonderful turn out from the congregations to support & celebrate their new pastor.

We welcome The Rev. Stephanie Backus to our Presbytery, along with her husband Rob & son Alex.



Upcoming Events Around Kiski



You are invited to attend the closing worship service for

Faith Presbyterian Church

to be held on Sunday, January 18th at 2:00pm
to celebrate their many years of mission & ministry in
the Kittanning area.

We hope you will come & celebrate the rich history of
this congregation as we say goodbye.

A cookie reception will follow the service.

150 East Brady Road, Kittanning, PA 16201

Elderton invites men aged 50 & over to join us for a transformative Bible study led by Mark Schrecengost. This engaging study will be held at Crouse's Cafe, Shelocta, at 11:00am on the third Tuesday of each month. We'll be exploring Quiet Strength, an inspiring guide by Coach Tony Dungy, which offers powerful insights into faith & resilience.

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.

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

Plumville is seeking a caretaker to keep our church clean & orderly. We are open to weekly or biweekly cleanings depending on cost & availability. Common tasks include:

- Sweeping & dusting common area throughout the church (stained glass windows & window sills should be dusted)
- Ensure that the sanctuary is orderly & neat
- Clean restrooms & kitchen
- Clean glass & mirrored surfaces
- Collect & set garbage at the curb
- Sweep porches & entrances
- Clean interior of windows & exterior of windows that fold inward in the spring & fall

If you are not available to open or close the church for special events or otherwise, but are able to clean, we would still like to speak with you!

Please contact Ben Gandolfi at 724-397-2727 if interested, to discuss compensation, or if you have any questions.

Clearances & Background Checks

In every congregation of Kiskiminetas Presbytery, we are committed to creating communities where trust, care, & welcome are at the heart of our shared life. One of the most practical ways we live out that commitment is through maintaining clearances & background checks for all staff & volunteers who work with children, youth, & vulnerable adults.

Clearances are a visible sign that a congregation takes safety seriously. Parents feel more comfortable entrusting their children to our ministries when they know volunteers have been properly vetted. Members feel reassured when their leaders & helpers are part of a culture of accountability & transparency. In this way, background checks build trust, not suspicion.

Clearances help safeguard our congregations from legal risk and financial harm. Insurance providers, state regulations, & denominational policies all recognize that proper screening is essential. By keeping our clearances up to date, we ensure that our congregations remain strong & able to continue their mission without unnecessary vulnerability.

Maintaining clearances is not simply about meeting requirements; it is about living out who we are called to be. As we steward the ministries of our presbytery together, may we continue to embody Christ's care for the vulnerable, a call to accountability, & His vision of a community where all can grow in trust & faith.

[FBI Fingerprinting](#)

[PA State Police & Child Abuse History Clearances](#)



Mandated Reporter Trainings

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)

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

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**.

Birthdays

Pastors with January birthdays:

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

Formation Commission News

- There will be Elder Training offered on Monday, January 26th at 6:00pm at the Plumville Church. More details to come later.
- We are doing some work with our Pulpit Supply Preachers in the coming year. We know that congregations do better with strong scriptural preaching. More details to follow in the new year.

Greetings from Gitarama Presbytery, Rwanda

Dear Beloved in Christ,

Warm greetings from EPR Gitarama Presbytery.

We are very pleased to write to you on this occasion to wish you a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year 2026. During the Advent season, we experienced a meaningful time of drawing closer to God through prayer, singing, worship, & acts of love. Now, as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ & welcome the New Year 2026, we would like to extend our heartfelt wishes to you.

As we reflect on our journey throughout the year 2025, we give thanks for your prayers, special gifts, & kind & precious support. Your support has been very helpful to our Presbytery through many activities, especially during the time when many of our parishes have been closed. We are truly happy & grateful for the gifts you sent to us, & we wish to let you know that we received them with joy & thankful hearts.

Our wish for you in the coming year 2026 is that it may be filled with joy, happiness, development, prosperity, the love & blessings of God, & that the almighty hand of God may guide you forever.

Blessings,

Rev. Fidele Sibomana, Moderator of Gitarama Presbytery



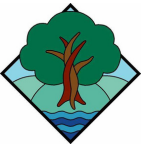
Presbytery Directory

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](#).

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.

2025 Necrology Form

The 2025 Necrology Form was sent out on Tuesday, December 2nd. It is due by **Tuesday, January 13th** in order for it to be included in the packet for the January Stated Gathering. The form is available to download 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.