

THE KISKI WEEKLY



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

Hello from Dayton, Ohio! I'm spending the time in between my conferences in Louisville & Chicago here with my family, which means my office is either Starbucks or Panera Bread. It's been lovely to be back here in Dayton & I'm not upset to have access to all the restaurants, coffee & shopping within a 10-15 minute drive from my parents' home. This is the first time being back here for longer than a quick trip in five years, so I am grateful for the ability to work on a remote basis.

A couple of things to share with you this week. I know that we are heading into a busy season of the life of the church. And, before we know it, we will be in 2026! Here are some things to keep in mind:

- The January Stated Presbytery Gathering is on Saturday, January 17th at 10:00am at New Rehoboth-Greenville Presbyterian Church. The call letter for this gathering went out **this Tuesday**, so there is plenty of time to register.
- Clerks: A major communication is coming during the first week of December (email or mail) with the following information/forms:
 - Information for your Annual Statistical Report. Be sure that you have your church's user id & password to enter the portal. If you need this information, please email me or the office.
 - 2026 Church Information Form & Elders List. We ask that you return it to the office by Monday, January 5th, so we can make the final edits to the 2026 Directory.
 - 2025 Necrology Form which will be due by Tuesday, January 13th. Any information received after this date will not be included in the January Stated Gathering.
- During the **first week of December**, all treasurers & clerks will be receiving the new 2026 Mission Remittance Forms along with a letter outlining some changes at the national level regarding mission. Please keep an eye out for this communication.



Finally, I want to share that Joe Billotte, vice-moderator, was in Louisville at the end of last week for the Moderator's Conference. This photo was shared of Joe receiving communion from Rev. Cece Armstrong (co-moderator of the 226th General Assembly) & Rev. Jihyun Oh (Stated Clerk & Executive Director of the Unified Agency).

Blessings,

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News from the Communities of Faith

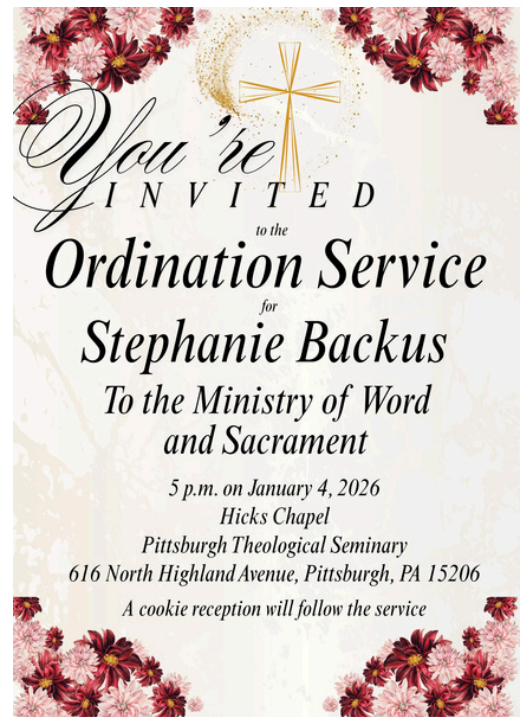


On Sunday, November 16th, the Communities of Faith Churches (Crete, Shelocta Community, & Trinity) held a joint worship service & congregational meeting at the Shelocta Community Church for the purpose of calling a new pastor to serve them. With 100 people in worship, they voted to elect Stephanie Backus to serve as their new pastor.



Stephanie is a recent graduate of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary & is a candidate (certified ready to receive a call) in Pittsburgh Presbytery. She is a journalist & has been working for Hearst Television managing a team of national news producers, in addition to serving as a student pastor at Langeloth Community Church in Washington Presbytery.

She will begin her service at the Communities of Faith on Sunday, November 30th for the 1st Sunday of Advent. She will be ordained in Pittsburgh Presbytery on Sunday, January 4th. We look forward to Stephanie serving with us in our presbytery!



Presbytery Upcoming Events

November 8th - 21st: Erin working remotely from Ohio; Angela working remotely from Tennessee

November 19th - 21st: Erin at Mid Council Financial Conference, Chicago, IL

November 24th - 30th: Erin on vacation

November 24th: 7:00pm Advent Lectionary Group begins (Zoom)

December 7th: Erin preaching at Wilcox Church

Ark Encounter Event

Clarksburg Trinity Presbyterian Church is offering all churches in our Presbytery to join them in April 2026 for a two-day trip to the Ark Encounter & Creation Museum in Kentucky.



\$100 Deposit needed by January 1st to Trinity Presbyterian Church, 18 Clarksburg Rd., Clarksburg, PA 15725.

Please contact Katherine Davis (Email katieliza93@gmail.com) for more information

If interested in joining, please use the following link to register : [Ark Encounter Registration Form](#)



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

- **Mt Zion's** Presbyterian Women packed 18 shoe boxes & had them dedicated on November 2nd.
- **Trinity** celebrates the days of detouring are over! The Clarksburg bridge is now open & the church is now easier to find.
- **Shelocta** held their annual Rwanda fundraiser with a breakfast & basket raffle. The funds raised (\$1,035.00) will go to our sister church, Kirwa, for their needs. A special raffle was held for a handmade quilt made by one of our pulpit supply ministers & gifted to us to help raise funds.
- **Shelocta's** deacons held their annual Harvest Home Collection of collecting paper products to be distributed to the Shelocta/Armstrong Township food bank participants in November.
- **Shelocta** has plans to adopt a family from Salvation Army's Adopt a Family for Christmas. They will provide gifts & all items needed for a Christmas meal.

Christmas Concert

Get into the Christmas Spirit with a free evening of holiday music with Chad Toland!

Dec. 6

- Starts at 6pm
- Music at 7pm
- Free Shuttle

LIVE MUSIC BY CHAD TOLAND

- BASKET RAFFLE
- 50/50 RAFFLE

Contact below for tickets:
Apollo United PC
401 First St.
M-F 9am-2pm
724-478-4807

Indigo Market
2107 River Rd.
Sun-Sat 7am-2pm

Apollo United Presbyterian Church
401 First St. Apollo

A Love Offering will be taken for our musician and Food4Kids.

Contact below for tickets:
Quality Life Services
151 Good View Dr.
M-F 8am-4:30pm
724-727-3451

Bolling Springs PC
1668 PA-56
Tues/Thur 3pm-6pm
724-478-1523



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025
155 N. JEFFERSON STREET,
KITTANNING
Two Performances 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
Free to the Public

"Once, There Was A Star, is an original composition by Carnegie Mellon University students Chris Renaud and Alex Irwin. The cantata features the choir along with vocalists and musicians from Carnegie Mellon University.

Once Upon A Christmas Luncheon

Friday, November 21
11:00am - 1:30pm

Luncheon \$10 Adults

- Soups
- Sandwiches
- Salads
- Desserts
- Beverages

Take-Outs Available!

Edenburg Presbyterian Church
"The church on the corner"
405 Main Street in Knox, PA

Advent Lectionary Group is Back!

The Advent Lectionary Group is back for another season! This group is convened by Donna Kanouff, Commissioned Pastor at Clymer & Harmony United. It is held on Zoom on each Monday during the Advent season. All are welcome to join - all pastors, pulpit supply preachers, & anyone who wants to study the lectionary passages during the season. No registration is needed, just come!

First meeting is on Monday, November 24th from 7:00pm-8:00pm.
[Click here to join.](#)





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**.

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

Clearances

- **Mandated Reporter Training** (Child Abuse Prevention) - all ministers, elders, deacons & volunteers who work with children. Certificates are good for 36 months.
- **Boundary Training** - all ministers & elders. Must be done every 36 months (according to the Book of Order)
- **FBI Fingerprint Clearance** - all ministers. Certificates are good for five years (in accordance with PA state law & Presbytery policy)
- **PA State Police Clearance** - all ministers & those who work directly with children. Clearance is good for five years (PA state law), but are highly recommended to be done every 3 years for protection of our churches.

Presbyterian Women Upcoming Events

- Synod of the Trinity PW Gathering is from July 16-18, 2026, held at Antiochian Village, Bolivar, PA. The theme is Find Joy in the Journey! Join us! All sisters welcomed!

Birthdays

Pastors with November birthdays:

- November 5th - Matthew Gress (CP, Crete)
- November 16th - Bill King (Retired)
- November 17th - Marty Cartmell (St. Benedict & St. Paul's)
- November 28th - Erin Kobs (Org Presbyter & Stated Clerk)

Need Something? Call Us!

Have a question? Need some information about an upcoming event? Looking for a particular resource?

If you are in the need of something, please call us here at the Presbytery Office. We will make sure that you are put in touch with the correct person to answer your questions whether it is the Formation Commission, the Organization Commission, or our two Presbyters (Training Presbyter or Organizational Presbyter/Stated Clerk). We are here to help & want to make sure that you are getting the correct information.

Rwanda Partnership News

Our Rwanda Partnership will be celebrating it's 20th year in 2026. In honor of that, two things will be happening.

- In June 2026, we will be hosting a trip to Rwanda for interested folks. The trip will be June 1st -11th, with an opportunity to visit parishes that are sponsored by our congregations. The trip is limited to 8 folks. If you are interested, there is an [application](#). Applications are due to Mark Phoebus by November 30, 2025.
- 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 Philippian 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.



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

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 will be arriving via email along with a letter shortly.

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.

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

Annual Statistical Reports

It is just about that season again! Please be on the look for information on how to file your annual statistical report in your email or via mail in the coming weeks. I would advise clerks to begin gathering the necessary information in preparation of filing your report.

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. The 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.

Update from Syria & Lebanon



November 15, 2025

As fall moves towards winter, the situation in Syria and Lebanon continues in a pall of uncertainty and you can hear it in the words of our partners.

From Lebanon we are being told by our liaisons that “people are still waiting for a better situation, still facing economic problems and waiting for peace...our people are longing for peace. Some of our displaced people returned to their villages in the south of Lebanon, trying to rebuild their houses and some are still in Beirut and its suburbs, while many of our young people are leaving the country seeking to a better life and to continue their studies abroad.” Very recently, one of our partners reported that drone flights and even drone attacks have taken place in areas near Beirut.

They send their appreciation.... “Your prayers have helped us a lot. We thank you for your interest in us. Please continue praying for peace in Lebanon and in the middle east.”

We heard from one of our pastors serving in the Kurdish area in the northeast of Syria who says, “Life... is unstable here, we never know what will happen now or tomorrow...or even yesterday. Our security...is vulnerable but we still try to do our best to plan for families and the church. Here in the Kurdish area it is better than inner Syria and the southern area.... People don't trust our country's leadership and there don't seem to be any international arrangements to make Syria more democratic.... On the ground there are no differences on any level.... Pray for the churches here, many are disappointed and have no hope that things will change.”

He continues, “I was also very pleased and blessed to be present on Zoom with you at the meeting (SLPN Annual Gathering). It was a joyful opportunity for me to meet you and for you to hear from me about us. This is an honor for me. Thank you for your love. We are praying for you. Continue praying for us.”

“We had many meetings with the Kurds urging them to reopen our schools. Initially they refused and wouldn't listen to us... We filed a complaint with the commander of the SDF (Syrian Defense Forces), who promised to resolve the matter and indeed, that's what happened. Today is the first day of classes for our students. We prayed a lot and the Lord answered us - to Him be all glory. Thank you for your love and prayers.”

Good news has come from another of our pastors, also in the north of Syria. She reports that the schools have opened because of an agreement from the local authorities. The agreement allows the schools to open for this school year only and only half of the previously enrolled students in Hasakah have returned with the parents of the remaining ones concerned that the SDF may “do something” to interfere in the operation of the school. The educators and administrators are all present keeping watch to ensure the children are safe and the instruction is as intended. Some students have moved on to attend schools in Homs and Damascus before the school reopened.

Our prayers are needed for the discussions of the various Arab tribes and Kurdish groups to refrain from making our schools a “political issue,” as “Christians are a minority here.” They are questioning why “we should listen to them.” Also please pray for the safety and security of the students and educators in these schools, as they attempt to catch up after the delay in opening the fall term.

Of late, we understand that Israeli forces have continued their daily attacks in southern Lebanon while maintaining their occupation to five key points in the south which has complicated the Lebanese government's efforts to disarm Hezbollah. The Lebanese authorities, with support from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, is seeking to establish itself as the sole legitimate military force in the country. All this while Lebanon's economy remains in tatters and in need of international assistance.

Update from Syria & Lebanon (continued)



Lebanese President Joseph Aoun has expressed hope that the United States will use its influence to hold Israel back from further attacks in Lebanon and that their own efforts to disarm Hezbollah will be successful so that support for his country can infuse efforts for recovery on all levels.

Remember that this update is not a formal news release from any news organization, but the voices and observations of our partners on the ground in Syria and Lebanon. Please hold them in your prayers as they seek a greater peace and stability for their corner of the world. We are grateful to God for undergirding their perseverance and faith during these times.