

The Week of November 23, 2025

THE KISKI WEEKLY



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

As we enter the season of Thanksgiving, our hearts are drawn to the words of Psalm 100:4: “Enter His gates with thanksgiving & His courts with praise; give thanks to Him & praise His name.” This time of year gently invites us to slow down, look back over the months behind us, & recognize God’s faithful presence in every step of the journey. Even in seasons of uncertainty, God’s grace continues to sustain, guide, & strengthen us.

Thanksgiving is far more than a day on the calendar. It is a posture of the heart - a spiritual rhythm that teaches us to see God’s blessings woven through ordinary days. We give thanks for the moments of joy, for prayers answered in unexpected ways, & for the quiet mercies that often go unnoticed. We give thanks for the lessons learned in difficulty & for the hope that anchors us through every trial.


As church families, we have much to be grateful for. We give thanks for the fellowship, the ministries that continue to touch lives, & the generous hearts that serve both within our congregations & throughout our communities. We give thanks for new friendships formed, for opportunities to worship together, & for the ways God is shaping us into a people who reflect God’s love.

This season also calls us to extend our gratitude outward. Thanksgiving is not complete if it remains only spoken - it becomes whole when it becomes lived. Let us remember those who may feel lonely, burdened, or overlooked. May we offer hospitality to neighbors, encouragement to the weary, & compassion to the hurting. In doing so, we embody the very love of Christ, who has given Himself so generously to us.

As we gather around tables & share meals with loved ones, may we be mindful of the greatest gift we have received - the unfailing love of God through Jesus Christ. May gratitude fill our homes, peace fill our hearts, & hope fill our conversations.

I’m truly thankful for each member of our Presbytery. Your presence, prayers, & faithfulness enrich our communities in countless ways. May God’s blessings overflow in your life this Thanksgiving season, and may God’s joy and grace surround you in the days to come.

Wishing you & your loved ones a blessed & joy-filled Thanksgiving!

Blessings, 

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Kiski Presbytery
Synod of the Trinity

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Rev. Dr. Angela Cowser: trainingpresbyter@kiskipby.org

Presbytery Upcoming Events

November 24th - 30th: Erin on vacation; Angela in TN

November 24th: 6:00pm Formation Commission

7:00pm Advent Lectionary Group begins (Zoom)

November 27th: Presbytery office closed

December 7th: Erin preaching at Wilcox Church

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.](#)

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:

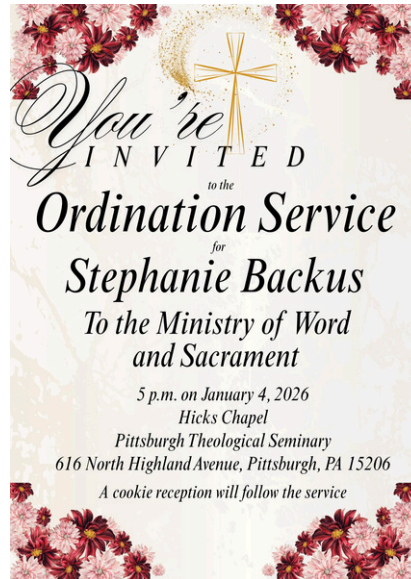
officemanager@calvarychurchpa.com

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.



Stephanie will begin her service at Crete, Shelocta Community, & Trinity Churches on November 30th.

Good News Board

Have some good news to share?

Email us at orgpresbyter@kiskipby.org

- **Elderton** is participating in our 13th year of the Angel Tree for the Christmas season. Each year, they receive names & gift ideas from Armstrong County CY5, offering them the chance to bless children in need within their community. The congregation & Butterfly Hill Preschool look forward to this tradition each year & continue to show overwhelming generosity, helping keep this meaningful ministry alive.
- **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.

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](#)

Upcoming Events Around Kiski



Christmas Concert

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

Dec. 6

- LIVE MUSIC BY CHAD TOLAND
- Starts at 6pm
- Music at 7pm
- BASKET RAFFLE
- Free Shuttle
- 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

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



Sunday, December 7, 2025
Grace Presbyterian Church
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.

Walk with the Shepherds

Saturday, December 6th 10:00am to 12:00pm
Beechwoods Presbyterian Church



Come take an indoor walk among the shepherds anytime between 10:00am & noon for a morning of creative fun for all ages. Free & open to the public. Any questions, please call 814-371-2981.

It is a live event where “shepherds” tell about the birth of Jesus Christ in their own words & through various stations that recount the events recorded in the Bible through drama, engage people of all ages in hands-on activities like crafting an ornament & playing music or singing, & invite all to join in refreshments

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.

Elderton warmly invites you to experience the magic of the season as the Elderton Choir presents a captivating Christmas Musical “One King” on December 21st, during our worship service at 10:30am.

Elderton invites folks to join them for a beautifully planned Christmas Eve candlelight service at 8:00pm, featuring a heartwarming Christmas message, & uplifting music as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.



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

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 21, 2025

Over the past year, as an outgrowth of the conflict between Israel and Gaza, the people of Lebanon have suffered from nearly continuous attacks by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), especially, though not exclusively, in the southern part of Lebanon along the Israeli border. Beginning the day after the Hamas terrorist attack on the Israeli communities on October 7, 2023, as Hezbollah began attacking Israel from there, southern Lebanon was attacked by Israeli forces. attacks which eventually extended miles into Lebanon.

Our partners have reported that even prior to October 2023, Israeli aircraft have staged daily flyovers in the south over the many farms and villages of the area. This most recent report is from our NESSL partners, which you can read it below. As you can tell in this report, the situation is tense and impacts both Lebanon and Syria, having implications for the entire Middle East. It is clear to us that our prayers must continue as the situation changes.

This letter from the NESSL was received earlier this week:

Finally, an official report with specific numbers to share with you regarding the scale of destruction following the recent Israeli-Hezbollah war in South Lebanon. The Lebanese Center for Research and Development issued an updated report on the scale of destruction from 17 September 2024 to the present. Although a ceasefire was declared on 27 November 2024, the Israeli military operation did not stop, aiming to destroy Hezbollah's military capabilities, which continue to threaten Israel and hinder the establishment of a normal state in Lebanon.

Destruction of Buildings

Before the ceasefire: 11,127 buildings destroyed
After the ceasefire: an additional 2,764 buildings destroyed
Total: 13,891 buildings destroyed

Rubble

Before the ceasefire: 7.5 to 10.5 million tons of rubble
After the ceasefire: an additional 1.4 to 2 million tons
Estimated time needed for removal: one full year
Estimated cost: USD \$10 million per village

Agricultural Damage

16% to 21% of greenhouses destroyed
89,000 hectares (222,500 acres) of agricultural land were completely burned due to cluster munitions

Solar Energy Systems

Before the ceasefire: 14,859 damaged solar panels
After the ceasefire: an additional 2,922 panels
Estimated losses: USD \$2 million

The South Lebanon Council estimates total reconstruction costs between USD \$5–6 billion. These numbers remain preliminary, as Israeli strikes have not fully ceased.

In light of these findings, the coming days remain concerning. The situation on the ground continues to be unstable, with Hezbollah not cooperating on de-escalation efforts and Israel still carrying out attacks in the South. Recovery will require sustained commitment as communities navigate ongoing risks and long-term rebuilding.

Your continued prayers are deeply valued during this critical period. As Lebanon is prepared to receive a scheduled solidarity visit of Pope Leo at the end of November, all spectators are expecting a wave of attacks on Lebanon to force Hezbollah to hand over its weapons to the Lebanese Army.