

The Week of May 18, 2025

THE KISKI WEEKLY



From the Desk of Rev. Erin Kobs, Transitional General Presbyter

Friends,

Over the last several months, I've been traveling around the Presbytery leading mandated reporter trainings at six different churches, with several more upcoming in the next few weeks. Each church has been so gracious in hosting folks from other congregations for the trainings & we've also had a number of folks attend via Zoom. In total, 148 folks have received the training - elders, deacons, ministers, & volunteers. This is such a great turn out thus far! In fact, we are having a place another order for the participant workbooks, as we are quickly running low. It is so important that we have people trained in what to look for when it comes to child abuse. What I say during each session is that we all want children to grow up into healthy adults & we as the church can play an instrumental role in making that happen. If your church is interested in having a training, please reach out to me or call the Presbytery office & we will get you onto the calendar.

One of the things I've enjoyed most is getting to visit the churches. I'm really starting to learn where all of our congregations are located at around the Presbytery. Also, I love to drive & so the rides to & from are often times so beautiful, even on some rather back road situations! I'll turn on a podcast or a playlist & take some time to think. It does pass the time & is an opportunity to get a change in scenery. I absolutely love looking at all the farmland, particularly if there are animals in the fields. This is something I have enjoyed since moving back to Western PA almost five years ago.

I am hopeful to visit with other churches throughout the Presbytery in the coming months. If you are interested in hosting a Coffee with the GP, would like me to visit with your session or other groups in your church, please let me know. I am happy to find time to make it happen. As always, I am here if you should need anything. I'm a phone call or an email away!

Blessings,

Insurance Reimbursement Fund

Does your church have Guide One Insurance?

The Presbytery has a fund to help reimburse your deductible when you have an insurance claim. This is not just claims from storm damage. If you have a claim, you can send in your information regarding your claim for the Presbytery to review. The reimbursement will be for \$500.00.

For more information, please contact the Presbytery office.



Link to Kiskipby.org

Link to the Synod of the Trinity

Session Record Review

Attention Clerks of Session!

We have reached the season of having our annual record reviews. Thank you to all who have already signed up. There are still a few churches that need to sign up for one of the reviews. If you are not able to make one of the following dates, please contact Erin for alternative means of review.

[Register here](#)

The dates for the reviews:

- Wednesday, May 21st 3:00pm at Presbytery Office
- Saturday, May 31st 11:00am at Shelocta Community Church
- Monday, June 9th 5:00pm at Appleby Manor Church
- Thursday, June 12th 6:00pm at First Presbyterian, Clarion
- Saturday, June 21st 11:00am at The Presbyterian Church of Punxsutawney

Upcoming Presbytery Trainings

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.

- **NEW:** Wednesday, June 11th 5:00pm at the Presbytery Office. **This training is in person & via Zoom.**
[Register here.](#)

There will be additional training sessions offered later in the spring & early summer. Look out for those dates & locations coming soon!

If your church is interested in hosting a Mandated Reporter Training, please contact Erin Kobs, Transitional General Presbyter & Stated Clerk

PA Annual Report

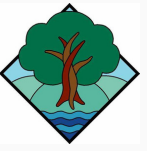


Beginning in 2025, all churches will need to complete an Annual Report with the state of Pennsylvania in order to maintain their non-profit status & tax-exempt status. **You will need to file this report by June 30th** (no cost to file). If you file after June 30th, there will be a fee. Continued non-compliance could result in your church falling out of "good standing" or even administrative dissolution by the state.

- All churches need to update their contact information & report on who their corporate officers are for their "Corporation" (i.e. president, secretary & treasurer)
- The corporate officers must be properly elected by the session (unicameral board) or Trustees (bicameral board) & documented in your minutes. If your church has not elected officers recently, you need to begin the process & duly elect them before filing the Annual Report.

How do you update your information?

- Log into the website [Business Services | An Official Pennsylvania Government Website](#)
- Fill out the necessary information
- [A step by step guide for filing the report](#)



Upcoming Events Around Kiski

- Arcadia is hosting a **Clothing Give Away** (Clothing Bank) at our church on May 31st from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Clothes in any size, just bring something (bag, laundry basket, etc.) to take as much or as little as you would like.
- Edenburg's annual **Very Berry Festival** on Thursday, June 19th from 5-8 pm. They will be serving up strawberry shortcake, angel food cake, assorted berry desserts, hot dogs, & ice cream. Donations will be accepted for food. Take out is available. Limited seating; bring a lawn chair. Music by Sawyer Stepp. Everyone is welcome to attend at 405 Main Street, Knox, PA.
- Trinity is holding their **Vacation Bible School** from June 16th-20th (6:00pm-8:15pm). The theme is Live Out Loud: Discover How to Love Like Jesus. Children 3 years -7th grade are welcome! Preregistrations are welcome but not required. Call the church office at 724-639-3622 & leave a message with your child's name & age.
- Dayton Glade Run is holding an **18 hole Golf Scramble** on July 19th at White Oak Golf Course in Dayton. You can register teams of 4 members. Tee time is 10:00am. Registration is \$260/team (before June 30th) & \$280/team after that date. Register by contacting Sheila Wadding at sdwadding@windstream.net.

QuickBooks

Your church use QuickBooks? Are you concerned with the rate increase? Feel free to contact Kimberly Warner, bookkeeper, at the Presbytery Office to talk about your options!

Job Opportunities

Calvary Presbyterian Church in Indiana, Pa., is currently seeking a Director of Community Assistance and Mission, and also a Director of Christian Education. The Director of Community Assistance and Mission will work closely with the Mission Committee and Pastor to create and lead faith-driven programs that make a real difference in the lives of our neighbors. The Director of Christian Education will spearhead collaborative efforts to design, plan, and implement programs tailored for youth, children, and adults.

If you or someone you know might be a good fit, learn more on our website: calvarychurchpa.com/jobs

Good News Board

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

- So overjoyed at the good things the people of **Boiling Springs** did in the wake of the storms & power outages the first week of May. Thank God for the Session that voted "yay" for a generator!
- The youth of **Calvary** worked hard serving bistro guests last month during the annual Bella Notte pasta dinner. More than \$2300 was raised toward the purchase of water filtration kits needed in Rwanda.
- **Trinity** is in the planning stages of a two day trip to the Ark Encounter & Creation Museum in Kentucky. They want to open it to anyone in the Presbytery who are interested. Please talk with Bonnie Davis for more information or email Trinity Church (clarksburgtrinitypres.org)
- Trinity had a fundraiser for World Vision during the Lenten & Easter season, they collected over \$1,500. They created a paper chain to represent the money & it wrapped around the sanctuary more than one time!

Birthdays

Pastors with May birthdays:

- May 5: Niki Atkinson (Apollo & Boiling Springs)
- May 5: Dan Satler (Saltsburg)
- May 6: Boyd Edmondson (Retired)
- May 9: Adam Clever (Freeport & Srader Grove)
- May 13: Maynard Grunstra (Retired)

Lectionary Discussion Group

Our Lectionary Discussion Group meets each Tuesday evening from 7:00 to 8:00pm on Zoom. All are welcome to attend - pastors, elders, church members who want to learn more about each week's texts. [Join Here!](#)

Wee Kirk Conference

The annual Wee Kirk, a small church conference, will be held on October 13th-15th at Laurelville Retreat Center in Mount Pleasant. The purpose is to inspire, equip, motivate & encourage small churches of any denomination & to provide rest & refreshment for the clergy & lay leaders like you! There will be a variety of workshops, opportunities for networking & conversations, & a chance to peruse the Hearts & Minds Bookstore. Registration for churches with up to 150 members is \$200.00 per person. If you register before August, it is \$175.00! There are brochures at the Presbytery office or you can go [online](#) for more information & to register.

Pre-Order for 2025-2027 Book of Order

We are currently taking pre-orders for the new Book of Order that goes into effect on July 2, 2025. If your church wants to order, please email Cheryl or call her at the office. The print copies will arrive at some point in July. There will be a PDF version available on July 2nd.

Coffee with Erin



Erin is seeking a church or churches who would like to host Coffee with the GP. This would likely be during the day, most likely an afternoon. If your congregation is interested, please talk with Erin.

2025 Stated Presbytery Gatherings

Saturday, September 13th, 10:00am, Slate Lick Presbyterian

Saturday, November 1st, 10:00am, United Presbyterian, Blairsville



Pulpit Supply Gathering

The Congregation & Pastor Formation Commission is holding a Meet & Greet on Tuesday, June 3rd from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Presbytery Office. This is for those who are currently on the pulpit supply list, all those who currently fill the pulpit on Sunday mornings in our Presbytery, & those who might be interested in becoming a pulpit supply. Please RSVP to the office by

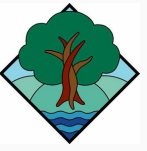


Presbytery Directory

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

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

PC(U.S.A.) Syria-Lebanon Partnership



Since we last updated our Network asking for your specific prayers, our sources are telling us that the Sharaa government is so fragile they cannot control the foreign jihadist groups. While it is difficult to estimate their numbers, some observers claim that these groups number 5,000-8,000 fighters. Al Sharra, the leader of the new government, seems obliged to work with them even though they are Al Qaeda members and carry the flags of Al Qaeda and the jihadists. Many believe that this is the reason influencing the United States' refusal to recognize the Interim Government.

The incidents which took place in the coastal region March 6-8 are seen by many as a reaction to the new authority. Whether it was done with or without their approval, the incidents have shown how fragile the government's actual control is over extremist armed groups and over the thieves and criminals who might take advantage of any absence of police to raid homes and kill their occupants. After these March incidents, nearly all countries took a hard position against approving the Interim Government. Consequently, no sanctions have been lifted, leaving even Qatar unable to transfer money to Syria, funds that could be used by the government to pay salaries.

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We were also told of a video circulating on social media containing profane words spoken against the prophet Mohammad, read by a Druze Sheikh. It was said that later the government claimed that the video was fake and that they were investigating the source. Calls for revenge were said to have started in Homs University while crowds attacked the university dormitories, attempting to arrest and kill the Druze students. The Druze, however, were able to escape and flee to Jaramana where many Christians, Muslims and Alawites live.

On Wednesday, April 23, jihadist groups came from Idlib and attacked Jaramana, flying the flags of the Interim government (HTS). A rash of religious conflicts blew up between the attacking groups and the security forces of the city. The city was bombarded by artillery, resulting in 14 people killed and a large number wounded. The official statement reports that many armed outlaw groups were fortified in main buildings around the city center and that they attacked the security forces. That forced the government to send the army, which included some jihadi groups supporting the security forces.

We have also heard that following these incidents, Israel launched two air strikes targeting the government army and the security forces. A statement from Israeli PM Netanyahu warning Al Sharaa to resist any attacks against the Druze was issued. This seems to complicate the situation as Israel had previously disallowed the Syrian government from sending any army or weapons into the three southern counties in Syria, populated mostly by Druze.

PC(U.S.A.) Syria-Lebanon Partnership



We learned that since May 3 the government and Druze religious leaders agreed on steps to be taken that would protect the Druze residents in three cities where they are most prevalent, including the delivery of heavy arms to be delivered to the cities and Army forces being sent to guard them against any out-of-control armed groups. This measure is intended for the areas of Jaramana and Sahnaya, both in close proximity to Damascus.

On a happier note, we have other reports from NESSL churches along the coast saying that Easter services were well attended and that, at least in some cases, security forces showed respect for the Christians, making things safe and accessible for worshipers. Since then, weekly church events and activities continue to flourish.

Nonetheless, our sense is overall that there seems to be a rising sense of fear and uncertainty with an increase in daily kidnappings and killings, which the government has dismissed as “individual acts.” We were also told that Islam is now being taught in the schools and that people are punished for political views they’ve never held simply because of the religion their families were born into. Combined with more demands on women for modest dress, this leaves many Syrians questioning whether the rhetoric of the new government is genuine or a ploy to earn international approval. A new government for all Syrians seems in the minds of many to be very much in doubt.

The relief ministry of the Synod is in high gear as the majority of the people are still in desperate need. Through many donors, the church keeps helping with food and hygiene kits, medications, medical surgeries, cash, clothes, etc. This ministry of care has been ongoing since 2012 when the economy collapsed amid the attacks being waged from inside and outside the country and the impact of Western sanctions.

The situation in other parts of the country is quiet at the present time with small steps taken to move forward. Electricity is available for one hour out of every five. The fuel for cars and gas for cooking are all available but at world market prices, which most Syrians can’t easily afford.

Our sources have reported that goods from surrounding countries like Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan have flooded the Syrian markets. For example, statistics show more than 100,000 cars have entered the Syrian market after more than a 13-year ban on automobile imports. These mixed and confusing circumstances have seemed to keep the standard of living very low.

One of our pastors told us, “Syria has been destroyed on every level... and needs a lot of money, effort and time to be healed in order to be reconstructed and become productive again.” He seems to share the view of many that the new authorities have a massive burden with a lot of complications and obstacles which they are unlikely able to lift alone. He continues to believe Syria will need the whole international community to give them a helping hand in this endeavor.