

THE GOOD NEWLONSBURG

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

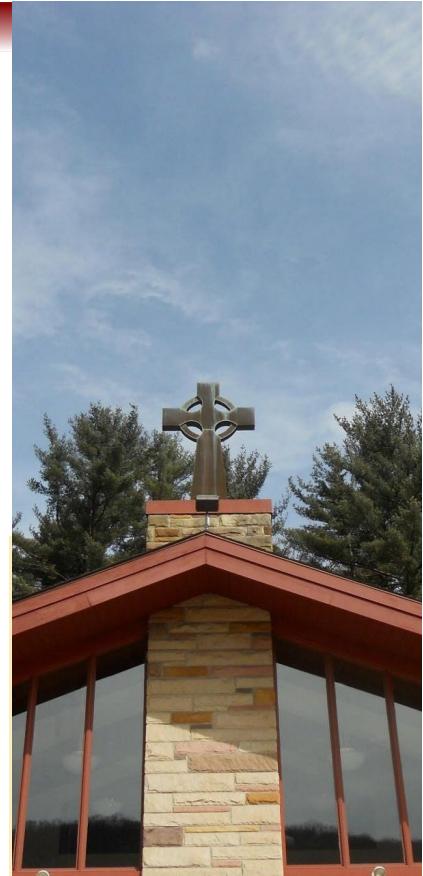
How are you God's presence in the world? In what ways have you been God's presence recently? In what ways are you training to be God's presence in the world?

Joseph, Jesus' human father (I make that distinction because we believe Jesus' actual Father is God), is reminded by an angel that Jesus is *Immanuel*. *Immanuel* in Hebrew means, "God is with us." This title comes from the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 7:14. God commands Isaiah to use the name *Immanuel* to name Isaiah's son amid the Assyrians conquering Israel in 722BC. The capital of the northern kingdom of Israel was Samaria; hence, we get the name Samaritans. The southern kingdom of Israel took on the name Judah; hence, we get the name Jews. *Immanuel* is to be a sign that God is with us, even when the world is falling apart all around us.

Jesus doesn't want to be the only *Immanuel*, God with us. Jesus teaches us the Truth, the Way, and the Life for us to be God's presence in the world. The question is, "How are you training to be God's presence in the world?"

Jesus doesn't want you to train alone. Remember in John 20:22 when Jesus breathes into us and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit!" We can always call upon the Holy Spirit in prayer, especially in our darkest moments. Remember your baptism. When we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, one of the wonderful gifts that we receive is Christ's Holy Spirit. If we are in a dark moment because of something we have done, we can ask for God's forgiveness. If someone has hurt us, we can call upon the Holy Spirit to empower us to forgive. If you have not received the wonderful gift of Christ's Holy Spirit, if you have not been baptized by Christ's Holy Spirit, all you have to do is ask. Pray for Jesus to be the Lord of your life, ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins, and ask Jesus to breathe His Holy Spirit into your soul! Jesus wants you to be God's presence in the world.

Jesus doesn't want us to train alone! His Church is the training facility. It's at worship, where we are encouraged to serve to train each other. It's at worship, where we practice generosity to change the world. Jesus wants



[Inside this issue](#)

[From the Pastor](#)

[Stephen Ministry](#)

[Hunger Offering](#)

[Year-End Giving](#)

[Fellowship Events](#)

[Advent Dinner Thank You](#)

[Healthy Seminarians](#)

[Upcoming Youth Events](#)

[Children and Family](#)

[Realm Connect App](#)

us to be God's presence in the world and shows us how. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus prophesies that when He judges the whole world at His return, He will ask each of us, "How were you God's presence in the world?"

Sometimes the world falls apart, but we Christians are to be reminders that God is with us. We Christians are to bring God's presence into our homes, into our schools, into our workplaces, not by forcing others to believe what we believe, but by showing others the Way, the Truth, and the Life by demonstrating the generosity and empathy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Commit to training to be God's presence in the world in 2026 by actively showing up to worship and practicing prayer throughout the day!

Love,

Pastor Curtis

STEPHEN MINISTRY

The dawning of a new year carries with it hopes for a renewed faith that our world will reflect God's love and Christ's message for all humanity. We also hope that our own rough spots can be remedied or removed in a timely fashion. Unfortunately, God's time is not our time, and some problems and difficulties don't come and go in a year's time. As we pray for patience to bear with our challenges, we may need help, understanding, and some grace.

These things can come with a relationship with a Stephen minister who is trained to walk with those who are hurting in any capacity. Stephen ministers embody patience, skilled listening, and support to help folks deal with their problems. This support is offered in complete confidentiality and is not geared to giving advice or direction. Stephen Ministers are trained to give space to allow God to enter. They give care; God gives cure.

Anyone needing support and Christian caring can contact Pastor Curtis. All referrals are confidential and quickly assigned.



JANUARY 4TH HUNGER OFFERING TO AID STARVING PEOPLE IN SOUTH SUDAN

Although we now hear little about it in the news, the grave situation in South Sudan continues to worsen. The country broke off from Sudan in 2011 after decades of guerrilla warfare. After two years of peace, South Sudan experienced new conflict that pitted armed men from the largest ethnic groups against each other. The civil war that erupted in 2013 continues to rage on. Humanitarian needs in South Sudan have escalated to alarming levels, and the situation remains highly unstable and insecure. Countless people have died of hunger. Additional warfare broke out in the spring of 2023 as a power struggle between rival generals.

South Sudan is facing what the World Food Program has called “the humanitarian crisis of our time,” as tens of millions struggle through sieges, blockades, and aid shortages that have pushed entire cities into famine. More than 150,000 people have been killed, and millions have been displaced from their homes.

At least 21.2 million people are now facing high levels of acute food insecurity, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, the internationally recognized system for assessing famine and food insecurity.

Our first Hunger Offering of the new year, to be taken on **Sunday, January 4th**, will be used to help ease the tragedy that continues to befall our South Sudanese friends and to show them that they are not forgotten. Please help feed His sheep, and please pray for peace and comfort for all. Your generosity can truly make a life-saving difference to a brother or sister in South Sudan.

Our usual options are available to make your contribution: by check, online at our website, or by text.

Give by Check: Checks can be made out to “Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church” and mailed to 4600 Old William Penn Highway, Murrysville, PA 15668 or placed in the offering plate. Please include your envelope number and “hunger” on the memo line.

Give Online: <https://onrealm.org/NewlonsburgPres/-/form/give/now> or click the **Give** button on the website. You can select a specific fund or multiple funds when making your donation.

Give by Text: Text **NEWLONSBURG** to **73256**. You will receive a giving link and can then select a specific fund for your donation.

EMERGENCY MEALS AVAILABLE

If you or someone in our church family is facing a short-term challenge that makes it hard to prepare meals, we'd love to help. Emergency meals are available for anyone in need. Please reach out to Pastor Travis, Pastor Curtis, or Carol Byers (412-841-5508) to let us know how we can support you.



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

You can easily meet the New Year's resolution of helping to reduce Per Capita costs to NPC. Congregations pay an annual amount of money per church member - per capita apportionment - to their respective presbyteries. Please consider including your share (\$55 per member in 2025) of this amount with your offerings. Per capita is the way congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) connect, participate, and share in the work of the wider church, "mutually sharing the costs of coming together to discern the Spirit's leading." Blue per capita envelopes are available in the pews, in the hall racks, or in the office. You may also just write "per capita" on the memo line of your check. Thank you.

YEAR-END GIVING

As we approach the end of the year, let's remember the importance of giving to NPC. Your generosity supports the upkeep of our place of worship and the outreach programs that help those in need within our community. As of November 30th, our Common Good expenses have surpassed giving by \$28,000. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference. Let's come together and give with a joyful heart, knowing that our collective efforts can bring about positive change and spread God's love. The last day of giving during 2025 is Sunday, December 28th. Thank you for your continued support and faithfulness.

CALLING ALL VALENTINE CARD MARKERS!

The Care of Members Ministry is looking for creative card-making volunteers of all ages to craft Valentines for members who are homebound, living alone in assisted living facilities, going through difficulties or loss, and for our super seniors. Please help us bless these members by making cards no larger than 5"x7" that will lay flat. You may want to include a bible verse or an encouraging message. You can drop off cards in the box outside the church office before **12:00 pm on Sunday, February 8th**. You can also help us pack the cards after the second service on 2/8/26 (in the "yellow room"...first room on the right as you enter the Education Wing from the Sanctuary).





Fellowship Events

NEW YEAR'S POTLUCK BRUNCH



Come and enjoy fellowship with your NPC family at our annual simple, continental-style New Year's Potluck Brunch on **Sunday, January 4th, 2026**. We will meet in Fellowship Hall between worship services. Bring some fruit or breakfast pastries to share!

<https://onrealm.org/NewlonsburgPres/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=g=ZWNkNjZhMmYtNGY0NC00OTdiLWJkMjAtYjM5ZTAxNTIyYmYw>

Thanks in advance to our New Year's Brunch Hospitality Chairs (Dodie Hagan & Judy Oates) and Team Members: Ken & Beth Ann Bobish, Amanda Bobish, Michael & Barbara Carroll, Todd Caughey, Ben Caughey, Ron & Caren Donaldson, Beverly Evans, Mitch & Bettie Jarosz, Susan Keaney, Bill & Kathy Lukitsch, Tom & Billie Moser, Anne Nevin, Michael & Rachel Oates, Amelia Oates, Lucas Oates, Jill Oster, Janice Rehwald, John & Diane Schaupp, Scott & Beth Sherman, Dave & Betty Trout, Debbie Wallisch, and Christy Weir.

JANUARY MEN'S SATURDAY BREAKFAST

The Men's Saturday Breakfast will be **January 10th, 2026, at 8:30 am** in Fellowship Hall. All NPC men and their male friends are invited. No reservations are required. For more details or questions, contact Carl Vernon.

HOSS'S LUNCH

Enjoy a nice lunch immediately after the second service with a group of fellow NPC'ers on Sunday, 2/1/26 at Hoss's Steak & Sea House.

<https://onrealm.org/NewlonsburgPres/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=MG11MDg1OGMtYjJmMS00YmFjLWlwNjAtYjNhODAwMTc4MTI1>

FUTURE EVENTS

Save the dates for these other events so you don't miss out on the fun.

- **Hoss's Lunch** on Sunday, 3/8/26 after the 11:00 am service
- **Export Moose Fish Fry** on Friday, 3/20/26 at 5:30 pm
- **Easter Brunch Potluck** on Sunday, 4/5/26 between services
- **River City Brass Band** "Les Mis N'At" on Saturday, 4/11/26 at 7:30 pm at The Palace Theatre (preceded by dinner at 5:30 pm location TBD)
- **Senior Celebration** on Sunday, 4/26/26 after the 11:00 am service

PUZZLES & PIZZA NIGHT

Calling all puzzlers, age 9 to 90! Join us for some puzzling fun on Wednesday, 2/25/26 at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Competition begins at 6:15 pm sharp, so don't be late! Assemble your own team of 2-4 people or come solo and join some fellow puzzlers for a friendly jigsaw puzzle race. Each adult team will tackle a 500-piece puzzle, and each youth team will complete a 300-piece puzzle. The youth group will join us that night for puzzling or playing games! Pizza will be served! Bring a snack or dessert to share and invite your friends. Sign up online at Realm or on our in-person sign-up sheets.



<https://onrealm.org/NewlonsburgPres/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NTFjM2JjODEtYzlyYi00NGVkLWJLZWMtYjNhODAwMTczY2ly>

THANK YOU FOR THE ADVENT DINNER

Thank you to Julie & Alex Gebrosky, Dodie Hagan, Judy Oates, Marcia & Rich Smith, their Hospitality Committee members, and all the members who contributed to the delicious and joyous Advent Dinner feast to help us start our holiday season off right.





HEALTHY SEMINARIANS-HEALTHY CHURCH UPCOMING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Score a Touchdown with Flavor: Healthier Super Bowl Party Foods Workshop!

Get ready to host the ultimate game-day party! Join Karen Webster, HSHC co-founder, for a **“Healthier Super Bowl Party Foods”** workshop in partnership with Plant-Based Pittsburgh. Learn how to create incredibly satisfying versions of your favorite fanfare classics by swapping out less healthy ingredients for delicious and nourishing plant-based alternatives such as 6-layer bean dip (including nacho sauce and “sour cream”), creamy spinach dip, ranch dressing, and more!

Of course, for those who are able to attend in person, there will be samples available to try.

🕒 When: Saturday, January 10th, 2026 (Saturday)

⌚ From 1:00 - 2:30 pm ET

📍 Where (hybrid): Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church (in The Gathering Room) AND via Zoom

Fuel your fandom (and your body) with recipes that are sure to be the biggest hit of the day.

To register (for this free workshop), please go to: bit.ly/HSHC-SuperBowl-PartyFoods-Reg

NEW ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY FOR WINTER 2026!

Along the Way: Mystics, Martyrs, and Saints

Over the past year and a half, a number of NPC members have been gathering to study church history, from the origins of the early church through the Protestant Reformation and up to the present day.

In January, we will come together again for *Along the Way: Mystics, Martyrs, and Saints*. Rather than going through church history chronologically, this 11-session course, lead by Don Pearson and Travis Webster, will explore particular individuals in church history within the context in which they lived and believed. As we go, we will learn about the process of canonization throughout the ages, discuss the role of saints in the modern day, and consider what we can learn from these pillars of Christian faith as we seek to live holy lives now. For our main resources, we will use the Great Courses series, particularly lectures offered by Dr. Emily Graham, of Oklahoma State University, and Dr. William Cook, from SUNY Geneseo. Supplementary materials will include a student book with additional lecture notes and primary readings.

You don't have to have taken the previous installments to join us in the Gathering Place on Wednesdays from 10:15am-12:15pm, starting January 21. If you are interested, or have any questions, please let Travis know at 724-327-0061 or travis.webster@comcast.net by Friday, January 9, so we can have the student manuals ready. You can register through Realm by using this link:

<https://onrealm.org/NewlonsburgPres/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=YmlyZGYwMmEtYjYxNy00MjVjLWFkZmMtYjM5NDAxMmJkOWQ3>

As always, we hope you will join us as we continue along the way!

FROM THE YOUTH DIRECTOR

New Beginnings

Happy New Year! It's time to start fulfilling New Year's Resolutions. I was curious about the history of this practice and decided to Google it. In an article written by Dr. Louisa McKenzie for *The Times*, she writes that one of the earliest practices of making New Year's Resolutions can be traced back to ancient Babylon. To summarize Dr. McKenzie, ancient Babylonians celebrated the new year at the beginning of March, which was the period of time they would start farming. This celebration was called "Akita" and was a festival that lasted "12 days". Dr. McKenzie writes, "As part of Akitu, the Babylonians made resolutions in the form of promises to [their] gods, particularly to pay debts or give back borrowed items, in return for a favorable coming year." There is much more to this article, and if you would like to read it, here is the link: <https://www.thetimes.com/life-style/luxury/article/a-history-of-new-years-resolutions-times-luxury-dst9n092x>.

As fun as a harvest festival sounds, I am glad that my relationship with God isn't on a quid-pro-quo basis, or that I have to do things for God to do something for me. And while I'm not particularly fond of the book of Revelation, I take comfort in Revelation 21:5, which says, "I am making all things new." For me, setting goals and making resolutions are all great ideas in theory, but the practice raises some questions. What am I truly working to achieve? Is my heart set on becoming the person God is calling me to be? Am I looking to glorify God with the decisions, or am I seeking my own glory? What change is God making in me, and how will that change manifest this coming year? As you make your resolutions, I hope you take time to pray and consider what God might be calling you to do this year. What will you do to participate in God's work of "making everything new"?

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

As you think about how you will participate in God's work of making things new, here are some dates to add to your calendar:

January 1st - Registration opens for Winter Remix, hosted by Pine Springs. The retreat will be Friday, February 6th - Sunday, February 8th. Here is the link for more information: <https://www.pinesprings.org/remix>.



January 4th - New Year's Day Brunch will be held in Fellowship Hall following the early service.

January 19th - MLK Day of Service. Please join us at Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church on Monday, January 19th, for a special presentation and small group discussion with some of our friends from the Presbyterian Church in Charleroi. I have been working with Pastor Sharon Woomer to set up this event, and I am excited that it is coming together. Watch the bulletin for more information about the speakers and the time of the event. I promise this will be something you don't want to miss.

February - The Youth will help decorate for Valentine's Day and write Valentine's Day cards during Youth Group and RAM.

February - We will have a Sock Drive for Franklin Regional during Lent.

February 16th - Monday Funday and Mardi Gras themed party. More details to come.

February 18th- Ash Wednesday Service. There will be Youth Group that night, but it will be shorter and will end closer to 7:00 pm so that participants can attend the service with their families.

February- Travis and I will lead our Lenten Bible Study, with times and dates to be determined.

March 15th-16th – Lock-in and 30-Hour Famine. More details to come.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS



NO SUNDAY SCHOOL ON JANUARY 4 - INSTEAD, JOIN US IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL FOR POTLUCK BRUNCH!

CLUB 45 JANUARY 7 & 14 6PM-8PM For 4th and 5th grade! We are going to continue to talk about the outdoor worship space we are creating! We will learn how to make crosses out of branches, choose our direction for creating a communion table and Pastor Lori has a huge surprise for the group concerning baptism! Plus – the usual open gym, crazy games, and pizza! Never been? Your child is always welcome!

FAMILY PLAYDATE SATURDAY JAN. 10 10:30AM-12PM Get out of the cold and run off some energy! Bring friends and neighbors! Join us for open gym, a few silly family games, arts and crafts, and snacks! Sign up so we have enough supplies!

<https://onrealm.org/NewlonsburgPres/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NzNINWFiMGYtYTVmMC00YzNILWFkMmUtYjM5NTAxNjVjY2Vh>



JANUARY 25 ONE SERVICE SUNDAY @ 10AM AND CONGREGATIONAL MEETING @ 11AM We are having a one service Sunday followed by our annual congregational meeting. Activities and snacks for all age children will be available in the ARC. We will need a few adults and older teens to help with childcare. If you are interested, let Pastor Lori know!



MARDI GRAS MONDAY FUN DAY FOR GRADES K-8 2/16/26

9:30AM-2PM

Join the masquerade! We will build masks, make pancakes, and have crazy games to learn all about the traditions around Mardi Gras! Your child should bring their own lunch. Snacks will be provided! Registration will close 2/13/26. Spaces are limited! \$25/child. Please contact Pastor Lori for any questions. Call/Text 412-737-1412

<https://onrealm.org/NewlonsburgPres/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=MTM0MzlkMjYtMDZiNi00NWZmLWE2ZGEtYjNiMTAxMzhiYzVi>



CHILD WORSHIP LEADERSHIP NEEDED We want our children to know that they are an important part of our community! We love that our children can begin developing leadership skills at an early age! We are looking for child acolytes (people who light the worship candles) and liturgists (people who read in worship)! Acolytes should be at least 4 and liturgists need to be very good readers and be willing to practice previous to their participation. Sign them up for a date that works for you!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F44AEA82CA2F8CF8-59246032-children>



REALM CONNECT APP



The Realm Connect App is Ready!

What can NPC members do on the Realm App?



Downloading the App

The Realm Connect app is available to download for free for iOS or Android devices at the apple app store (www.apple.com/app-store/) or from Google Play (play.google.com).



Logging into the App

When the app is on your phone or other device, you can log in using your user name and password for the Realm Connect Website. If you have not set up a log in, you can visit: <https://onrealm.org/NewlonsburgPres/Account/Start>.

4600 Old William Penn Hwy
Murrysville, PA 15668

Phone:

724-327-0061

Email:

newlonsburgpresby@comcast.net

Website:

www.newlonsburgchurch.org

The Good Newlonsburg: January 2026

We are a Christ-centered community. In joyful response to Christ's love, we worship God, nurture disciples, accept all God's Children, and reach out in love and service to further the Kingdom of God.



The Good Newlonsburg:

A newsletter for the congregation and friends of NPC

Article Deadline for the February issue:

January 8th, 2025

Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church Leadership Team

The Rev. Curtis Lane Paul II, Pastor

The Rev. Dr. Travis Webster, Associate Pastor

The Rev. Lori Bass-Riley, Director of Children and Family Ministries

Joshua Kenst, Youth Director

Jennifer Wagner, Office Manager

Rachel Oates, Interim Office Manager

Bettie Jarosz, Choir and Bell Director

Matt Klumpp, Early Service Music Director & Organist

Leanne Salava, Treasurer

Ginny Rygg & Lindsey Berk, Financial Secretaries