

STAFF

Rev. Jean Smith,
Pastor

Marci Tenney,
Secretary

SESSION MEMBERS

Paul Bengs
Jo Coulter
Connie Jewell, Clerk
Noel Ryan
Lisa Staph

DEACONS

Brenda Bengs
Cathy Donaldson
Karen Ohler
Mary Ryan
Marcie Treese

TRUSTEES

Brian Jewell
Dave Steele
Pete Treese

Ebenezer Presbyterian Church

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**Articles and information
for the next newsletter
are due the 3rd week of
each month.**



Happy New Year! A brand-new year has begun. What kind of year will it be? Better than last year? We can only hope. As we enter the new year one thing is for certain, these are not the “good ol’ days” when just about everyone in our neighborhood went to church. I grew up in a neighborhood where literally everyone went to church on Sunday mornings. In fact, my next-door neighbor’s house was emptied out by robbers on a Sunday morning and nobody saw a thing because we were all at church. Gone are the days when our neighbors went to church, and we even knew which church they went to. Churches have become invisible institutions, no longer holding communities together in a common life and world view or a shared value system. Each year that passes brings a greater number of people who don’t attend church. They don’t even know someone who does. That means the chances of an unchurched person being invited to attend church by someone who does are getting less and less. Church researcher, George Barna says, “The point is that Christian churches of every shape and form are losing their place in people’s consciousness.” (*Growing Your Church from the Outside In*, p.111)

If we are to turn this trend around, we need to learn what makes a church attractive to an unchurched person. When asked, most unchurched people say they would only consider being part of a church where there is evidence of real Christianity. To them that means a church where people truly love each other and genuinely care for each other. Second in importance to an unchurched person is the quality of the sermons. They want sermons that they can relate to and that are delivered with a loving tone. They’re not interested in the finer points of theology. Third in importance to an unchurched person is a church that has a heart for the poor and disadvantaged in their community and in the world. To the unchurched this is another sign of real Christianity.

People today want a positive experience when they go to church. Whether it’s a relational experience, a spiritual experience, an entertainment experience or an intellectual experience, they want to be good. What they experience when at church must be good or they won’t want to come back. Experience rules in our culture today.

So what works to actually get an unchurched person to attend your church? Traditional marketing approaches, printed advertising, telemarketing, direct mailings, simply aren’t worth the cost today. People don’t answer their phone anymore if they don’t recognize your number. They don’t return calls to people they don’t know. They don’t open mail from anyone they don’t know. They ignore advertisements because they are bombarded with them all day long.

The thing that works best, that has the greatest influence on an unchurched person is a personal invitation from a trusted friend. Research indicates that 7% of unchurched people have not been personally invited to attend a church in the past 12 months. The obvious observation here is that most unchurched people are not being pursued by anyone to attend church. And yet, we are called by God to pursue them! Why aren’t we? Well, one reason is REJECTION. Of the 27% of unchurched who have been personally invited to attend a church in the past 12 months, only 4% actually did. That’s a lot of rejection. ***continued***

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Who likes to be rejected? Nobody! Rejection is a very real possibility when we attempt to lead a friend back to the church. We cannot let that stop us. The key to drawing people into the church remains personally inviting them. They do not come if we do not ask. And when they come, they need to see a people who genuinely love God, love one another and love those who are less fortunate. How ironic it is that in an age of technological advancements, what remains the most effective way of bringing people into the church is a personal invitation.

-Rev. Jean Smith, Pulpit Supply Pastor (January 2025)

Clerk's Corner:

- On motion, approval was given to Mandi Duncan and Brooke Deniker to sponsor a Cookie Walk on December 22, 2024 from 12-2 in the church social hall, hold Christian music workout sessions for women beginning in January, and rearrange use of Sunday School rooms.
- Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 26, 2025.
- Marci Tenney, Secretary, presented information on copier charges. John Hicks, from the Ford Office Company, will meet with the Session for an informational meeting.
- Minister Candidate, Jean Smith, was interviewed by Session members for the Ebenezer Pastor position. After discussion and feeling that she could meet the needs of Ebenezer Church, a motion was made and passed to hire her as Ebenezer's Pastor. She was scheduled to preach Christmas Eve and begin regular duties January 1, 2025.

Treasurer's Report: November 2024

Beginning Balance 11/01/24	\$ 8,323.73
Receipts: \$3,575.25	
Beginning Balance Plus Receipts	\$11,898.98
Less Expenses	\$ 4,091.80
Balance 11/30/2024	\$ 7,807.18
Balance Includes:	
Trustees Endowment	\$ 1,552.60
Missions Endowment	\$ 465.14
90 th Birthday Fund	\$ 867.74
Deacons Account	\$ 1,306.28
Missions:	
Saunders	\$ 80.00
Dan Schall	\$ 80.00
Relief	\$150.00
Available Undesignated Funds	
For General Use 11/30/2024	<u>\$ 3,305.42</u>

-Joan Coulter, Treasurer

Mission Focus:

The Mission Focus for January is Samaritan's Purse, an international, non-denominational evangelical Christian disaster relief organization. In addition to responding to hurricanes, floods, and other disasters, Samaritan's Purse oversees Operation Christmas Child.

OUR DAILY BREAD devotional booklets are available and free on the round table. Please take one to help you spend time with God and His Word every day.

JANUARY 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 New Year's Day	2	3 Chuck Gibbs	4 Women's Worship Workout 9:00 a.m.
5 	6	7 Gay Griffin	8 Cody Deniker	9 Noel & Mary Ryan	10	11 Women's Worship Workout 9:00 a.m.
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Women's Worship Workout 9:00 a.m.
19	20 Martin Luther King Day	21	22	23 Cathy Donaldson Harold Glisan	24	25 Women's Worship Workout 9:00 a.m.
26	27 Dave Steele	28	29	30	31	

Birthdays:

- 3 – Chuck Gibbs
- 7 – Gay Griffin
- 8 – Cody Deniker
- 23 – Cathy Donaldson
- 23 – Harold Glisan
- 27 – Dave Steele

Anniversaries:

- 9 – Noel and Mary Ryan

“Let us thank God for life and the blessings He’s put before us. High among them are our families, our freedom, and the opportunities of a new year.”
-Ronald Reagan

Get to know Rev. Jean Smith –

Reverend Jean Smith is a retired PCUSA pastor, having served various churches in western Pennsylvania over the past 26 years. She resides in Grove City with her husband, Paul Smith, who is a retired schoolteacher and a member of East Main (ECO) Presbyterian Church. They have seven children between them, eleven grandchildren (one more on the way), and one great-grandchild. Family is of utmost importance to them.

Pastor Jean is a conservative evangelical who loves the Lord and His people. Having a background in education and mental health counseling, she began seminary with the intention of pursuing a career in pastoral counseling and soon realized she enjoyed leading worship, preaching, teaching, program administration and pastoral care.

Since retiring two years ago, Pastor Jean has enjoyed worshipping at East Main and assists with the college ministry. She enjoys golfing, kayaking, working out at a local gym and traveling to visit family.

**Ebenezer Presbyterian Church
2426 Scrubgrass Rd.
Grove City, PA 16127**

**Women's Worship Workouts –
beginning in January, on Saturday
mornings at 9:00 a.m.**

Free and for all ages of women.

Bring an exercise mat and water.

**Any questions, contact Mandi
Duncan at 724-699-7269**

*"For I know the plans I have
for you," declares the Lord,
"Plans to prosper you and
not to harm you, plans to
give you hope and a future."*

-Jeremiah 29:11



To
Rev. Jean
Smith