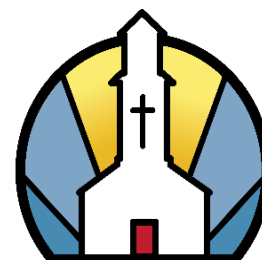


Nov. Dec. Jan. 2025/26

Saxonburg Memorial Church

Winter Newsletter



GREETINGS from Pastor Doug

It is that time of year again when the air turns crisp and the leaves continue to fall. As the nights grow colder, we begin to look forward to the season of celebration with friends and family gatherings. The next few months are filled with opportunities to gather, worship as well as serve together. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for these special events.

November 1st at 7 p.m. we have Middleground, a Bluegrass Band concert. On Sunday the 2nd we will have a "New Members" class at 11:10 a.m. We will meet in the Bride's room. Then there is the Veterans dinner on Monday the 3rd at 6 p.m. This is free for all veterans and spouses.

I hope we will gather together on Sunday the 16th at 5 p.m., as one big family and share a Turkey dinner and give thanks for the blessings in each of our lives. We look forward to breaking bread with each of you and sharing stories of gratitude.

Friday the 28th we are working on the float for the "Light-up Night Parade" that begins at 9 a.m. here in the parking lot, with the opportunity to accompany the float in the parade later that night. We can't forget about Light-up Night that same evening, where our church is used as a warming station. We are always looking for people to serve hot chocolate and hand out cookies.

Team Family and the Gingerbread house building kick off December on the 9th so bring the entire family out for an enjoyable night of fun and fellowship. Cantata weekend is Saturday,

December 13th at 7 p.m. and Sunday, December 14th at 4 p.m. This community choir and musicians have been working hard to prepare a beautiful and inspiring musical celebration of the birth of our Savior. Invite your friends, family, and neighbors for an evening or afternoon of glorious music that will fill your heart with the true spirit of Christmas. This is a free concert, and all are welcome!

Wednesday, December 24 at 6 p.m., is our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. This is a cherished tradition, filled with beloved carols, the reading of the Christmas story, communion, and a serene candlelit moment as we sing "Silent Night." This is a perfect way to center your heart on Christ before the Christmas Day festivities begin. Join us as we celebrate the coming of the Light of the World.

I am grateful for your faithful presence, your generous hearts, and the unique gifts you bring to our community.

It is a joy and a privilege to walk through this season of life with you. Our church is not a building, but a body of believers.

May your hearts be filled with the peace of Thanksgiving, the joy of Christmas, and the hope of a New Year.

In His Grip,
Pastor Doug



CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

GREETINGS CHILDREN OF GOD!

There are new things happening in the Children's and Family Ministry Department. We have begun more intentional efforts into meeting people where they are and embracing them on the journey. Our strength as a smaller church comes in sharing relationships with people. Children are loved, seen, and heard. Parents are supported through take-home family "Power Packs", Facebook encouragements, and through events with a purpose in our "Team Family" program.

During the month of December, Sunday school classes will rehearse a short Christmas Pageant to be performed at 11:10 am on December 21st. We invite the whole church to join us in the fellowship hall to see the children and share in a "Birthday Party for Jesus" brunch. Beginning in January, elementary age Sunday school classes will combine to begin the "Two or More" curriculum—designed to play on the strength of meaningful relationships with one another and Jesus.

Thank you for your support in the Children's and Family Ministry Program!

INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY

Team Family has been meditating on the theme "Take Courage" this fall which comes from Joshua 1:9:

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

In September, we discussed anxiety and what that feels like. We gave some helpful strategies when facing anxiety—pointing to our Great Comforter. We also hosted a courageous potluck with glow-in-the-dark fun. In December, we will switch themes to "Comfort and Joy" based on the verse Luke 2:10-11:

10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRY

Babies, toddlers, preschoolers and elementary age students are immersed in the Bible because of loving volunteers during the 10 am service. Thank you to all who help share God's love to our youngest members.



LIFE CHOICES "CHANGE FOR LIFE" CAMPAIGN STARTS JAN. 19th. To change a life with your spare change, pick up a baby bottle in the narthex and fill the bottle with coins, currency or a check written to "Life Choices" and return. Life Choices is a local pregnancy resource center assisting hundreds of women in choosing LIFE for their babies.

2026 MARCH FOR LIFE IN WASHINGTON D.C. – JANUARY 23

VISIT: <https://marchforlife.org/national-march-for-life/>

****There are many area churches that offer free bus transportation to the March for Life. Please call the office for more information.**

COMMUNITY OUTREACH / FAMILY FUN

****Make sure you grab your "Team Family Power Packs" for take-home devotionals, prayers, family connect ideas, and parental encouragement.****

Thanksgiving Dinner, Nov. 16th at 5 pm (+ Team Family activities)

Saxonburg Light Up Night Parade, Nov. 28th (Build the float 9 am that day, walk in the parade that night)

Gingerbread House Night, December 9th 6-8 pm (Register on line at saxonburg.org/Christmas)

Childcare for the Cantata, December 13th (6:30-9 pm) & 14th (3:30-6 pm)

Children's Christmas Pageant & Brunch, Dec. 21st at 11:10 am in the fellowship hall.

JOIN THE TEAM — Jump in to HELP!

Help attach the VBS coral reef to the trailer for the Holiday Parade – Friday, Nov. 28th @ 9-11 am. BE IN the Holiday Parade that same evening at 5:30 pm. Donate Candy for the parade. Help in the nursery or Sunday school. Join the Christian Education Committee to help with planning.

Yours in Christ,

Carrie Allio
Director of Children and Family Ministry
kidsandfamily@saxonburg.org

SUNDAY HOSPITALITY TEAMS!

SHARE the LOVE of CHRIST!

There are many ways to connect with people through service. Please pray and consider whether these opportunities might be a good fit for your personal gifts. *Look for a form in our service bulletins these next few weeks!*

Serve as an USHER. Help pass the offering plate during service. In the 10am service especially, our kids are wonderful helpers. We would love to see a larger team of adults come to lead and guide this important element of our worship.

BE a GREETER! In a new place, a friendly face and a warm hello can make all the difference. You are invited to join our Sunday morning greeter team. It's easy to do, and is so uplifting to our community. There's always a sign-up sheet on the coffee bar.

DRIVE the BUS to Concordia. We are so thankful to have a full team of drivers to bring our Concordia residents to our 10am service each week. Thank you!

MUSIC MINISTRY

* Thursday Nights are Music Nights! * Choir at 7:00 pm * Band at 8:15 pm *

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS CHOIR – Pre-K to 6th Grade

Rehearsals: Nov 9, 16, 23, 30, Dec 7 from 4:30 - 5:15 pm. Dress Rehearsal Thu, Dec 11 at 7:00 pm. SING in Christmas Cantata: Sat, Dec 13 & Sun, Dec 14. Open to all kids Pre-K to 6th grade. This year, the **KIDS CHOIR IS OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY AS WELL!** Invite someone you know.

MONTHLY HYMN SING OUTREACH – ALL Welcome to join!

Most months we are taking a day to share a time of hymn singing, Scripture, and prayer with our neighbors in senior living facilities. We meet at 6:30 pm. Please join in on any of these!

Fri, Nov 7 – Concordia Haven 2

NONE in December due to Christmas Cantata

Fri, Jan 2 – Concordia Haven 3

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CAROLING EVENT! - Thu, Nov 6 at 6:30 pm

On Thursday, November 6, Saxonburg's Main Street shops are hosting a "Holiday Open House" event. We are going caroling! All are welcome to join the choir to spread Christmas Cheer. Just meet in the narthex of the big church at 6:30 pm that evening. We'll dig some fun Dickens-era garb out of the closet, and then head down Main Street to fill the town with the Spirit of Christmas. Come for part or all of the time!

IN THE LIGHT WORSHIP BAND

The band meets Thursdays, right after choir at 8:15 pm. We're always open to new musicians joining us. Guitar players are especially welcome. We are very happy to help train up beginning players! Talk with Dan or any of the band members if you might like to serve in this way.

AUDIO / VISUAL MINISTRY

We can always use a few extra hands to help run our video stream and sound board during the 10am service. Please speak with Dan if you could serve in this area.

Blessings,
Dan Byerly, Director of Music Ministry
music@saxonburg.org



MUSIC MINISTRY

SONGS OF FAITH THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

“Dear Refuge of My Weary Soul”

Anne Steele is a name that is not too familiar to many church going folks these days. From a historical perspective, this is rather surprising as she was once one of the most widely dispersed and enjoyed hymn writers in the English speaking world. Anne lived in the 18th century as the daughter of a Baptist preacher. She penned 144 hymns, and 48 Psalms in verse (commonly referred to as “metrical Psalms” or “Psalms in meter”). Her hymns and Psalm settings were exceedingly popular from shortly after her death in 1778 through the 19th century. In 1808, an Episcopal church in Boston published its own hymnal, and out of the 152 hymns in the volume, 59 were by Anne Steele! This is really something; that a Baptist writer would have composed more than one third of the lyrical content in an Episcopal hymn book. Many of her hymns have fallen out of fashion, and to our great loss. But do not worry, we have them still, and they are waiting to be heard and sung once more. Here we explore “Dear Refuge of My Weary Soul.”

*Dear refuge of my weary soul, On Thee, when sorrows rise;
On Thee, when waves of trouble roll, My fainting hope relies.
To Thee I tell each rising grief, For Thou alone canst heal;
Thy Word can bring a sweet relief For every pain I feel.*

*But oh! When gloomy doubts prevail, I fear to call Thee mine;
The springs of comfort seem to fail, And all my hopes decline.
Yet gracious God, where shall I flee? Thou art my only trust,
And still my soul would cleave to Thee Though prostrate in the dust.*

*Hast Thou not bid me seek Thy face, And shall I seek in vain?
And can the ear of sovereign grace Be deaf when I complain?
No still the ear of sovereign grace Attends the mourner's prayer;
Oh may I ever find access To breathe my sorrows there.*

*Thy mercy seat is open still, Here let my soul retreat,
With humble hope attend Thy will, And wait beneath Thy feet.
Thy mercy seat is open still, Here let my soul retreat,
With humble hope attend Thy will, And wait beneath Thy feet.*

Anne dealt with severe pain and various health issues, attributed to malaria, for virtually her entire life. She lost several loved ones far too soon. This text reflects a beautiful Christian response to such difficult circumstances. Though we are tired and our sorrows beat us down, even to the point of weariness, we have still a refuge. The Christian maintains an everlasting and indomitable hope that, by the grace of the Lord Jesus, we can look forward to an eternal rest with Him in glory. And even now, while we yet haunt this mortal coil, we can be assured that the almighty, all powerful God is still merciful. He hears the prayers of His faithful and *will* tend to them in His time. When we find ourselves prostrate in the dust – cleave to Christ, for “still the ear of sovereign grace attends the mourner’s prayer,” and you shall ever find access to breathe your sorrows there. Praise God for His faithfulness, for His mercy, and for His salvation offered freely unto us!

Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.
Isaiah 40:31

Listen for yourself! This hymn has been set to many tunes over the years. A couple of recent settings are really excellent. Search “Dear Refuge of My Weary Soul” With either “Indelible Grace” or “Matt Merker” and you’ll find some beautiful renderings.

SAXONBURG CONCERTS

Free to Attend



MIDDLEGROUND *Bluegrass Band*

Sat, Nov 1 at 7 pm

at Saxonburg Memorial Church



More on this + other concerts at
Saxonburg.org/ConcertSeries

 /SaxonburgConcerts



YOUTH GROUP

LIVING WATERS YOUTH GROUP: Growing in Faith and Fellowship!

****Living Waters**** is **growing!** We're so thankful for the energy, friendship, and love that each of our young people brings to our gatherings. God is doing great things through this ministry, and we're excited for what's ahead!

We have some fun and meaningful events planned — including a special ****community outreach opportunity****, where we'll spend time connecting with others, sharing encouragement, and spreading God's love through service and fellowship.

We invite all teens to come be part of what God is doing! Whether you've been involved for a while or are brand new, there's a place for you here.

****Stay tuned** for more event details and ways to get involved.****** Let's keep growing together in faith, friendship, and fun!

Rob Bauer, Director of Youth Ministry
youth@saxonburg.org

SESSION OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Outreach Committee of the Session is in the process of developing visiting teams to call on our shut-ins and those who would like a visit. The plan is to have each team or person have 2 or 3 visits or phone calls a month.

If you would be willing to serve in this ministry, please let us know. Also, if you know someone we should visit or if you would like a visit from us please contact us.

Lori Pershke 724-316-6212

Karen Murphy 412-855-9657

Debbie Emmonds 724-234-5847

MISSIONS

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Every gift-filled shoebox is a tool for evangelism and discipleship for SMPC around the world. At Operation Christmas Child outreach events, boys and girls hear the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ and receive a tangible expression of God's love through one of your prayerfully packed shoeboxes.



Please consider including a letter and a photo along with your gift as these often become cherished items for the child. Operation Christmas Child also offers shoebox recipients a follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey. Through trained local teachers, boys and girls learn to follow Jesus and share Him with friends and family.

Samaritans Purse and the Graham family, through decades of delivering shoebox gifts supplied by SMPC and other churches around the world, have had the opportunity to share the Gospel with millions of people.

We are collecting through Nov. 9. You can also go online @ <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline>.

VETERANS' DINNER



This year Missions will be hosting a complimentary **Veteran's Dinner Mon. Nov. 3** in the Fellowship Hall to honor those who have served or are serving our country. This is an evening to share stories while enjoying some wonderful food. Music and a guest speaker will also be part of the evening.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on Saturday, December 13. A ceremony will begin at 11 am, followed by the placement of wreaths at the Saxonburg Cemetery located at N. Butler St., Saxonburg, where 300 local veterans are laid to rest. This is open to anyone who would like to attend. Each live wreath made in the US with Maine balsam costs \$17 to sponsor. **Order forms** are in the narthex and **must be sent by Nov.1.**



DEACONS – Ministry of Mercy to Those in Need

The Deacons of SMPC continue in our ministry of service, both to reach out to the needy in our community and to build up our church members and attenders in fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ and with one another. We could use your help in a few ways.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Nov. 28 Serve hot chocolate and hot cider and cookies in the evening of the Christmas Parade.

Dec. 1 Orders are due for poinsettias for our Christmas Eve services.

Dec. Speckled Hen Chocolate Fundraiser—Nov. 25—Dec 2. Buy your Christmas candy from Speckled Hen Chocolate at 656 Saxonburg Blvd. Please mention SMPC and we will receive a percentage from your purchase.

Dec. On a Dec. 14, we will have a Cookie Sale after both services. Christmas crafts will also be available that day.

THANK YOU for your love and support. We couldn't do what we do without you!!

TO HELP, and if you have or know of a need for assistance, please get in touch at deacons@saxonburg.org.

BACKPACK PROGRAM

Now through Dec. 14, we will be collecting large family size food to provide Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners to families.

BACKPACK LIST FOR THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS FOOD 2025

Turkey gravy mix
Cranberry sauce NOT WHOLE BERRY
Family size crackers, saltines or ritz
Large bags of chips, Tostitos, pretzels or Doritos
Creamy Peanut Butter, LARGE
Stove top stuffing TURKEY or CHICKEN
Canned Sweet potatoes
Corn or green beans canned
GRAPE JELLY LARGE
5# bag of potatoes
Pancake COMPLETE Mix 32 OZ or larger
Velveeta/Kraft Mac and Cheese, large box
STRAWBERRY JAM LARGE
Cake mix and icing
Cornbread mix
Rice 2 lb bag or larger

COOKIE BAG mix
CANNED FRUITS, LARGE CANS
PINEAPPLE CHUNKS LARGE CAN
Large family size cereals (NO BRAN CEREALS)
Spaghetti Sauce Quarts or larger
Pasta- varieties 1-2 lb boxes
Egg noodles large bags
Cream of mushroom soup
Chicken Noodle soup
Chicken and rice soup
Capri drink packs any flavor low sugar

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Tuesdays at 7pm

Please join us **Tuesdays at 7 pm** in the Bride's Room. Bring a Bible, pen, and notepad, and be ready to study the Word! Our next meetings are: Nov 4, 11, 18, 25; Dec 2, 9, 16; Jan 6, 13, 20, 27.

Thursdays at 1pm

Please join us **Thursdays at 1 pm** in the Bride's Room. We are discussing the book, *Becoming a Woman of Purpose* by Cynthia Heald.

WOMEN DINE OUT

Last Mondays 6 pm

"WDO" continues to meet the **last Monday of the month at 6 pm** at the Field House Restaurant. We'll meet November 24, then break for December and start back up Jan. 26. All women are invited for great food and fellowship!

SEWING GROUP

Mondays from 1 - 4pm

Meets **Mondays from 1-4 pm**. Please call the church office if you are interested in learning more about the Sewing Group. We'll take off the last two weeks of December. Our sewing group often commits our work to sewing for a charity such as veterans quilts, breast cancer robes and hats, pillow cases for women's shelters.

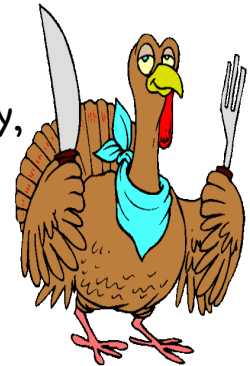
**SMPC ANNUAL CHURCH THANKSGIVING DINNER
+ TEAM FAMILY!
SUNDAY, NOV. 16**

5:00 pm

All are welcome for a delicious Thanksgiving feast of turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and gravy.

Please bring a side dish or dessert to share and your place settings! Sign up sheet on round table.

Cold drinks and coffee provided – bring a friend!



SMPC PARADE FLOAT - HELP NEEDED!

We are once again entering a Christmas Float in the Saxonburg Holiday Parade! We will be decorating the float the morning of Nov. 28 at 9 am. Come and help out and then BE IN the Parade to ride in or walk!



CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATING CONTEST!

Come join the fun as we decorate Christmas trees to be **displayed during Saxonburg Light-up Night on Friday, November 28**. We are asking individuals, family groups, or groups within the church to adopt a tree and decorate in any way. You can take your tree home to decorate or decorate it at the church anytime during Thanksgiving week. The trees will then be displayed in the choir room on Light-up Night where the public will be encouraged to vote for their favorite tree with a prize of \$50 with the most votes! After the contest, you may retrieve your decorations or leave your tree to be displayed. Please see Nancy Hanson with any questions. Sign up sheet in the church.

Lighting the Advent Wreath in the Tradition of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love



It is that time of year again, with Advent just a few weeks away. We are looking for your help to read and light the Advent candles of Hope (representing the hope before and after the birth of Jesus), Peace (representing the peace we find in Jesus), Joy (represents the joy we find in Christ), Love (represents the love we have in Christ Jesus) and the Christ candle which is lit on Christmas Eve (represents the coming of Christ) at both services. If this is something you and a friend or you and your family would like to do, please contact Pastor Doug at pastordoug@saxonburg.org or call the church office at 724.352.2888.

In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love; and remembering the promises of God with prayer.



POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS
RED, WHITE OR PINK
\$8.00 EACH

Order forms coming soon.

Orders due Dec 1st



Gingerbread House Night AND TEAM FAMILY!

Tuesday, Dec 9
6-8 pm

Join us for a fun filled night of house building, treat sharing,
and of course some friendly competition!

\$10/HOUSE

Please RSVP at Saxonburg.org



2025 Christmas Eve Service
Wednesday, December 24
6:00 pm

OTHER EVENTS in CHURCH LIFE

Saints Gone to Glory

Ralph Davis went to be with our Lord on 8/27/25

Quinn Passarelli went to be with our Lord on 9/21/25

Louis Byers went to be with our Lord on 9/26/25

Eva Pflug went to be with our Lord on 9/28/25

May God grant them eternal rest.

FINANCE UPDATE

Finance Update

Through September 30, 2025, General Giving tithes & offerings totaled \$241,000 which favorably exceeded the 9-month budgeted amount of \$216,000 by approximately \$25,000 .

Per the August 2025 financial statements (which were the most recent available as of the submission deadline for this newsletter) the Church recorded a bottom-line deficit of \$(7,000) which was better than the 8-month budgeted deficit of \$(30,000). As a reminder, the 2025 annual budgeted deficit is (\$67,000), prior to applying any proceeds from the Thomas Parnell Trust.

Work is already underway in preparing the new 2026 Operating Budget. Session expects to review and approve the budget by late January, with copies being mailed to the congregation during the first week of February, for final review and approval at the February 22 Annual Congregational Meeting.

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Rotary Playground Opening – Sun, Nov 9 at 1pm

Saxonburg Holiday Parade – Fri, Nov 28 at 7pm

Saxonburg Memorial Presbyterian Church
PO Box 466 100 W. Main St.
Saxonburg, PA 16056
(724) 352-2888



SAXONBURG MEMORIAL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“To Shine the Light of Jesus Christ; to Discover, Experience, and Share His Love with our Community and World.”

Worship Times: 8:00 AM Traditional — 10:00 AM Blended / Contemporary

www.saxonburg.org



@SaxonburgMPC



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Jackie Siano & Barbara Cornetti, Secretary

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Bob Young, Finance

finance@saxonburg.org

Cheryl Russo, Sexton

PRAYER REQUESTS

prayer@saxonburg.org

Sign up to receive our monthly E-mail Newsletter!

Just go to www.saxonburg.org and fill out the form at the bottom of the page.