



# The Presby

February 2024

Wytheville Presbyterian Church

285 Church Street

Wytheville, VA 24382

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Office Hours:

Monday - Friday

9:00 a.m. - Noon

Rev. Dr. John Langham, Pastor

April DiYorio, Clerk of Session

Becky Absher, Music Director

Tammy Jackson, Office Mgr.

Wendy Morrison, Bookkeeper



February Newsletter 2024

"More Than a Feeling"

*Greetings Members and Friends,*

*According to some, one of the all-time greatest Rock Bands was the 70's Rock Band, "Boston." They had such great hits as "Longtime," "Rock and Roll Band," "Amanda" and "More than a Feeling."*

*As I think about them I can imagine the words to their songs even now. In fact, in the song, "More than a Feeling," the lyrics of course are about the memory of a girl (Marianne) from days gone by.*

*There is a sense of nostalgia as the song recalls the memory of Marianne and communicates this throughout the song.*

*There is a lot more that could be said to explain things in the song, but that is for another time. However, what I do appreciate as much as anything else is the title of the song, where the impact of the memory is much more than just a fleeting feeling.*

*Very much in the same way as we enter into the Month of February and even think about this whole concept of love, we know that love is defined in many ways. And whereas love is certainly a feeling that many of us have towards one another, we also recognize that love is much more than feeling.*

*I Corinthians 13, reminds us of this and essentially reminds us that love is as much about action as it is about anything else. For here we read it is about patience, kindness, and is not jealous or arrogant. It does not brag and bears all things, believes all things, hopes in all things and endures all things.*

*Therefore, as we remind ourselves, and even take the opportunity to revisit the celebration of love, let it be more than a feeling and a word that we put into action with our friends, loved ones and many others in the world in which we live.*

*Peace and Love,*

*Pastor John*

## Session Digest

Stated Meeting, January 28, 2024

The Session welcomed Elders Kym Dunford and Jim Gearhart.

Pastoral Concerns: Joanne Cannoy, Joe & Shirley Cavender, Eural & Priscilla Clippard, Family of Gary Crouse, Colleen Dunford, Pastor John Langham, Janine Madden, Bill & Susan Pollard, Dorothy Repass, Judy Walters, Annette Washburn, Michael & Rachel Weller

### Motions approved by the Session:

- To accept the Finance Report for December 2023.
- To elect Kym Dunford as Elder Commissioner and Kat McCoy as alternate to the Presbytery for 2024.
- To elect Jim Gearhart as Assistant Clerk of Session for 2024.
- To approve the Annual Statistical Report to the Presbytery.
- To approve the committee chairs for 2024:
  - Worship – Charlie Madden
  - Christian Education – Kat McCoy
  - Budget & Finance – Jim Gearhart
  - Missions – Lisa Moore
  - Property – Chuck Lacy
  - Congregational Care – Kym Dunford
  - Personnel – Judy Crouse
  - Fellowship – Judy Crouse
  - Stewardship – Judy Crouse
- That no more than two family members be allowed to serve on Session at the same time.

### Review of Calendar of Events for February:

8 – Abingdon Presbytery meeting –Zoom  
9 – Parents Night Out  
11 – Souper Bowl Sunday  
14 - *Valentine's Day*  
14 - *Ash Wednesday*  
14 – Ash Wednesday Service @ 7pm  
25– Stated Session Meeting

Submitted by April DiYorio, Clerk of Session

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### **The Winter Weather Policy for our congregation includes the following guidelines:**

1. Sunday School and Worship services on Sunday morning will be as scheduled (9:45 and 11:00 AM) regardless of the weather. If some teachers are unable to travel safely to church because of weather conditions, some classes might be consolidated for a particular Sunday.
2. During weekdays, all congregational events (eg. Wednesday supper and program) will be cancelled if the Wythe County schools are closed for the day or dismissed early because of weather conditions. These events will not be cancelled if schools are operating on a delayed schedule (when school begins 1 or 2 hours late).
3. **During weekdays, if other activities are scheduled by smaller groups, the groups will contact their members about any changes of schedules due to weather conditions. These include: choir rehearsals, Presbyterian Women Circle meetings, Presbyterian Men's Prayer Breakfast, and all committee meetings.**

4. **On weekends, if weather conditions cause the cancellation of an event, the church will communicate this information as efficiently as possible.** If you have a question about a particular event, you may call Pastor John (919) 607-6448 or 228-4715).

**Most important, if weather conditions are not safe because of ice, snow, or temperature, please exercise caution in making a decision about whether or not to come for a church service or activity.**

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**5 Cents a Meal:**

Please remember the 5 cents a meal offering on February 18th. There will be a basket in the narthex or one for the people in the parking lot as they leave. Please make a separate check.

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**Newsletter & Office Information:**

Information for the March Newsletter needs to be in the church office by Tuesday, February 20th.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Hope Packs:**

We will be packing bags for Hope Packs on Wednesday, February 28th at 5:00 p.m. Please plan to help with this project!

\* \* \* \* \*



**Presbyterian Women:**

The Presbyterian Women Circle 1 will meet at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, February 5th in the Fellowship Hall and Circle 3 will meet on Monday, February 5th at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

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**Committee Meetings:**

- Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, A.D.K., 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Hatcher Hall
- Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, Church Growth Committee, 2:00 p.m., Hatcher Hall
- Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, Finance Committee, 4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, Worship Committee, 10:00 a.m.

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## **Sock It To The Superbowl!**

The Wytheville Women's Club is collecting socks for the homeless men, women, and children. Their goal is to collect 1,000 pairs of new or gently used socks (clean with no holes) by February 11th.

The socks will be distributed through the warming shelters and blessing boxes.

Drop off locations are:

Coulter's Florist, 200 East Monroe St.

Virginia Farm Bureau, 370 West Monroe St.

If you have any questions or need someone to pick up donations

email [wythevillewomensclub@gmail.com](mailto:wythevillewomensclub@gmail.com) or bring the socks to the Church Office by February 9th.

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## **Stewardship Message:**

Giving of Ourselves

We are each blessed with Spiritual Gifts that we have been given by the Lord. Our Stewardship of these gifts carries through our lives.

- As little children we give love and happiness to our families and our friends. We know the joy that small children give to older folks with a smile or the simple gesture of holding open a door.
- As older children we might help others in need by cleaning up a yard, taking out the trash, walking a dog, or simply helping someone across the street.
- As we mature our stewardship expands beyond our families and acquaintances as we assist people we encounter with events like changing a tire, giving someone a ride, baby sitting, or buying a needy person a soft drink and sandwich.
- When we reach adulthood and independence, we have more resources and the responsibility for managing those assets. We continue to invest of ourselves, and what we have, in who and what we love.

In supporting our Church, we show our love for the Lord and each other. We also want to share our faith and friendship with those who are not yet part of our congregation. Our Church programs, Congregational Care, and outreach activities require a continuing investment from each person to flourish and grow. We have been given much and the Lord asks us to share only a portion of these blessings.

God Bless each of us and our Church in our Spiritual journey of faith and service.

Your Stewardship Committee

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**Mission Co-Worker Update:** (Cont'd on part 2)



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
**Presbyterian Mission**

## Lament

November 29, 2023

### A Letter from Elmarie Parker, serving in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and the Gulf States

Winter 2023

**Write** (<mailto:Elmarie.Parker@pcusa.org>) to Elmarie Parker

*Individuals:* Give

(<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/donate/e132192/>) online to E132192 in honor of Elmarie Parker's ministry

*Congregations:* Give to D500115 in honor of Elmarie Parker's ministry

Churches are asked to send donations through your congregation's normal receiving site (this is usually your presbytery)

**Subscribe to my co-worker letters** (<https://share.hsforms.com/10XIAvh4ZRIO5Rtqq2lbGdgdf5ts>)

Dear Partners in Ministry,

I have tried writing this letter multiple times. My heart is weighed down with grief and my spirit is weary as I read the daily reports of shellings, death and destruction or talk with beloved partners in the region and hear their concerns. It is a season of deep lament. With the Psalmist (13:1-6) I pray and cry out, "How long, Lord?"

As complex as the 75-year-long history is between the modern State of Israel and Palestinians, so too is the history along the border between Israel and Lebanon. Since October 7, 2023, the daily exchange of fire between Hezbollah and the Israeli Army has pushed civilians on both sides of the border from their homes. On the Lebanese side, nearly 30,000 people have been displaced by the fighting from their towns to places further north in Lebanon. At least 42 towns on the Israeli side have been evacuated.

The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL) has six Presbyterian congregations along the southern border of Lebanon. It is a stunningly beautiful area filled with ancient olive groves and pine forests along with grazing

and farmlands, steep ravines, and small rivers. Now, the white phosphorous bombs used by the Israeli Army have burned more than 47,000 olive trees at the height of the harvest season along with hundreds of hectares of other agricultural land. It will take decades for the orchards and soil to recover.

Dr. Asaad Skoury, is an elder in the NESSL church of Deirmimas, a small Christian town of around 100 people on the southern border. In addition to serving as the shepherding elder of the congregation, he has also developed a medical clinic in the church. The clinic serves not only Deirmimas but also the citizens of the mostly Shi'a towns around them and the Syrian refugees living in the area. An average of 40 people come each day the clinic is open; a wide range of medical services are available.

In a WhatsApp call with him, he shared, “At the beginning of this war, I opened the clinic one day only so people could come and get one month of medications. Forty-five people came. I haven’t wanted to keep the clinic open for its regular hours because I don’t want to endanger anyone. We don’t know when the bombs might come. Already some have shattered windows in my home and left fragments not only in my home but across the village. Most people have evacuated to other parts of Lebanon. I started harvesting my olives, but I could not finish due to the situation. This is the same for almost all the farmers in our area.”

Rev. Rabih Taleb serves the NESSL congregation in Alma al-Shaab, another border town. Multiple shellings have resulted in damaged homes and burned orchards. Those that aren’t burned will die for lack of someone to water them. Children are again out of school, losing yet more educational time on top of what was lost during the pandemic and power outages from the economic collapse of Lebanon. Most of Rev. Taleb’s congregation has left for other parts of Lebanon, including his own wife and three young children. He now spends his day driving around Lebanon to visit his displaced congregation members. Through him, the NESSL is offering assistance where they can. In a November 2023 *Christianity Today* article, Rev. Taleb concludes, “This is living what we believe—a working faith. It is to show people that God loves them, through us, for his glory.” The NESSL is also preparing its conference center in Zachle to receive families from the south who don’t have any other place of refuge. So far three families are staying there.

Yet another partner, Adyan, an interfaith organization whose name in Arabic means “Religions,” is working to aid the thousands of families who have come from the far south to Tyre to find refuge. They are providing mattresses, food, water, clothing, blankets, and whatever else is needed that they can help with. Rev. Linda Macktaby, the former director of Blessed School, is co-coordinating this effort with a Shi’aa colleague.



The view from the Presbyterian Church in Deirmimas.





Some of the many olive groves across southern Lebanon.

Through our partners, I see flickers of light and life in the midst of relentless destruction—a counterpoint to the lament I feel. A space of grace opens in my spirit to join the Psalmist in that profound declaration of faith: “But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord’s praise, for he has been good to me (Psalm 13:5-6).”

We, as members of the PC(USA) are

participating in these flickers of light and life through grants sent by both World Mission’s Middle East/Europe Office and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Please let me know if you would like to further contribute to these efforts.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers, collaboration in advocacy work, and financial partnership. You too are a counterpoint to the lament that marks



my days. I am grateful.

Dr. Asaad Skoury (middle) standing at the southern Lebanese border overlooking northern Israel. Two friends, Pauline Coffman (right) from the Syria Lebanon Partnership Network (SLPN) and Noura Eid (Left), Near East School of Theology (NEST) student participated in this 2018 Solidarity Visit.

Continuing in Christ's Service together,

Elmarie Parker  
(Currently working from Oregon)



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# February

2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Happy Birthday Laurie Dean!
4 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	5 Circle 1 Meeting 11 a.m. Circle 3 Meeting 7 p.m.	6	7 Happy Birthday Kevin Craft!	8	9 Happy Birthday Rebecca Lane! Parents Night Out 6pm-9pm	10
11 Transfiguration of the Lord Souper Bowl Sunday	12 A.D.K. 6-8 p.m. H. Hall	13 Church Growth Comm. 2 p.m. Hatcher Hall Finance Comm 4 p.m.	14 <b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b> Valentine's Day Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.	15	16	17
18 5 Cents-a-Meal Offering 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent	19	20 Worship Comm 10 a.m.	21	22	23	24
25 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent Session Meeting	26	27	28	29		