

Mt. Pisgah Presbyterian Church

# The View

JANUARY 2026

But the fruit of the Spirit is  
*love, joy, peace,*  
patience, kindness, goodness,  
*faithfulness, gentleness,*  
*self control;*

Galatians 5:22-23

**Purpose:** To inform, encourage, and promote engagement in Mt. Pisgah's mission in the community, and opportunities for spiritual transformation. To invite reflection on the process of personal spiritual growth. To emphasize the bond that holds us together, and avoid magnifying the differences that separate us.

**Worship Service 9:45 am (see back cover for location)**



## Mt. Pisgah VIEW

### January 2026

Happy New Year!

As we put 2025 in our rearview mirror, we are not quite finished with Matthew's Gospel! We will finish our journey with Matthew in January and February of this new year. (Thanks for hanging in there with me!) Matthew's story of Jesus comes to a dramatic climax in the next couple of months. The plotline has been moving toward the final showdown, ending with the cross and resurrection. Matthew ends his story with a brief epilogue/marching orders for the disciples.

The ending of Matthew provides a beautiful segue to the focus for the rest of 2026. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, we will begin a year-long, deep dive into the person and message of the Apostle Paul. Paul is a close second to Luke with respect to the sheer volume of New Testament writings. His importance can't be overstated, both for the advancement of the Gospel into all the world (see Matthew 28:16-20), and for the shaping of theology for the post-ascension people of God. His writings are definitive for our discipleship to the end of the present age.

This past year has been focused on getting to know Jesus through his actions and teachings in Matthew's Gospel. This

year, we continue that focus on knowing Jesus better. We will do so through the lens of Paul's authoritative teaching, as one sent by the risen Christ to proclaim and teach the Gospel. We will discover how the Gospel should take shape as it makes its way into the larger world. Our focus will include a historical look at Paul – who is he? where did he come from? what are his qualifications? We will take time to look at some of his most important theological themes. As we listen to his letters, we will allow Paul to instruct us about how to read the scriptures, which is a key to knowing Jesus, and following him faithfully.

Watch for some helpful guides and resource recommendations at the start of the year. These will help you get to know Paul the person and assist you in following his story and teaching during the year.

My prayer is that you will encounter the Spirit of the risen Jesus this coming year. I hope you will have a year like Paul's experience of the Spirit when he encountered the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus. That encounter was dramatically life-changing for Paul. God is like that. God acts in surprising ways to change us for the better; to save us for faithful and holy obedience; to redeem us for glory to come.

Let's continue our journey together in 2026, intent on growing in conformity to the image of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Messiah.

Peace,  
Tom

# Session News

With a new year upon us, here are a few things your Session would like you to know:

- ◆ **Installation** of new elders will take place **January 11th** with the 1st meeting of The Session for 2026 being January 19th.
- ◆ **Members of Session for 2026** are:

Jill Folkmire, Cindy Grindel, Luanne Jones, Gary Lisivick, Bob Stroup, Luann Walton

The Session will use as its **study book**, **Paul: A Man of Grace and Grit** by Charles R. Swindoll. You are invited to read along with the Session. A schedule of readings will be available soon.

- ◆ The **annual meeting** of the congregation will take place on Sunday, January 25th following worship.
- ◆ The **Special Offering schedule for 2026** will include:  
Souper Bowl, February 8th to the Crafton Food Bank  
Lenten Offering, February 22nd-April 5th to Genesis House  
Christmas Love Offering, December 20th and 24th, to Genesis House
- ◆ Collection of the **Per Capita** payments for 2026 will be delayed until February 8th. Please hold your payment until then. This year's amount is \$40.00 per adult member.
- ◆ **Fellowship Directories** for 2026 are available in the Malawi Room.

As always, your prayers are requested and appreciated as the Session begins a new year.

For the Session who are in His Service,  
Marta Pletz, Clerk

## ***Memory Verses...to carry along the Journey***

This year, as Tom explained in his December VIEW message, we will address passages from the Apostle Paul's writings. The Sunday worship messages and our Sunday classes will be opportunities to better understand and apply Paul's teachings in our journey as Christians.

In addition to Sunday activities, you will be challenged each month to commit to memory one of Paul's "classic statements". The verse will be introduced at the beginning of the month, appear in the VIEW and BUZZ and in other, various ways during the year.

Our January verse is taken from the letter Paul wrote to the Galatians. In Chapter 5, verses 22 and 23 Paul lists character traits that we experience when we walk in step with the Spirit. Known as "Fruit of the Spirit", they are:

*"...Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control..."*

The full text of this verse is:

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Are you one to make New Year's Resolutions? Why not decide to make these a matter of prayer each day...reminders of what the Lord has in store: A singular Fruit produced, not by our efforts, but by the Holy Spirit as we abide in Christ, developing God's character within through our spiritual habits of prayer, study, and meditation. AMAZING GRACE!

For the Worship, Prayer and Learning Team,  
Marta Pletz

# Prayer Corner

*"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2)*

It's the beginning of a new year - a time we typically pause to reflect on our hopes for the future. Perhaps you've set a goal to lose weight, exercise more, or find a new job. But what about your spiritual life? Have you given any thought to how you might deepen your relationship with Jesus this year?

God desires to be our first love - our highest priority (Revelation 2:4). Spending time with Him restores us - physically, mentally, and spiritually - and equips us to face the daily challenges of this world. So I encourage you to think about how the Lord is inviting you into a closer walk with Him. Here are a few ideas to consider:

Set aside regular time for prayer. Just as quality time strengthens our earthly relationships, time spent with the Lord creates space for meaningful conversation and a deeper connection. Even a few minutes of focused quiet time each day can be transformative. You might also consider joining our virtual prayer group that meets Wednesdays at 5:30 pm. All are welcome. Contact the church for more information.

Read and meditate on Scripture. Several people in our congregation have shared with me how reading through the Bible in a year changed their life. If you weren't able to participate then, it's never too late to start. If you get behind, don't quit. With any of these practices, God doesn't expect perfection - just a sincere heart and a desire to know Him better.

There are plenty of other ways to incorporate God's Word into your life. Ask your friends or family to suggest a good devotional or faith-based book. Attend Bible study. Invest in a study Bible. Memorize a Scripture verse. I keep a box of index cards next to my reading chair. When I come across a verse that speaks to me, I write it down and reflect on how the Lord is guiding me to apply it to my life. I call these my "Fighting Words" as they keep me grounded in Scripture and help me combat the lies of the enemy. If you struggle with fear, anxiety, or negative self-talk, I encourage you to join us for a small group discussion on Taming Your Thoughts which will be offered sometime this year (exact dates to be announced).

Take a few moments out of your day to worship. Turn on a favorite song and sing praise to the Lord, or offer a word of gratitude. It's amazing how praise can change our mood or perspective as we focus our attention on His constant faithfulness.

Be creative! Keep a journal of blessings and answered prayers; make our monthly breath prayer a part of your daily routine. There's no one "right" way to grow in faith this year. Just start the conversation ... and be open to how God leads you. New faith experiences await!

Blessings,  
Cindy

The Prayer Corner Team consists of  
Cindy Grindel, Marta Pletz, and Luann Walton  
**Would you like to join us? Let one of us know!**

## January Breath Prayer

Breathe In: Lord, as a new year begins,  
Breathe Out: guide me in a closer walk with You.

***From the Worship, Learning and Prayer Team:***



Please join us after worship on the first and third Sundays of each month as we continue a deeper dive into the Book of Matthew.

It would be our blessing to fellowship around tables with you of this most wonderful study of the Gospel written by Matthew, inspired by our risen Lord and Savior Jesus!



January worship services will be  
based on the following:

January 4	Matthew 25:1-46
January 11	Matthew 26:1-29
January 18	Matthew 26:30-56
January 25	Matthew 26:57-68

**An *updated* schedule of remaining scripture readings,  
“Preaching 2025 A Year with Matthew,”  
is available in the Malawi Room.**

# God's Promise When You Pray

Follow the directions to reveal God's Promise to you when you pray to Him.

- In even numbered lines, cross out books of the Bible
- In line 3, cross out two repeated words
- In odd numbered lines, cross out rhyming words
- Cross out the name of a Christmas carol hidden in one of the lines
- In lines 2 and 3, cross out words related to gardening
- In line 1, cross out words ending in "D"
- In line 5, cross out words ending in "L"
- In lines 1, 4, and 5, cross out desk items

Line 1: the ruler Lord eyes land might pen of the  
lifted light lied

Line 2: plant acts Lord reap are kings flower upon  
hoe judges the

Line 3: soil the righteous seed star sow and his  
plant the far fruit

Line 4: ears oh job are mouse mark come open all  
ye faithful

Line 5: all unto soul clip seed their eternal paper  
deed real cry

Solution can be found on page 18.

# Simple Living

God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself..." Genesis 1:26



During Advent, we had devotionals provided by the Worship Team published by the Society of St. Andrew. The following is from an insert in the devotional.



## **The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) is the Ultimate Green Ministry**



### ***Good Stewards of God's Creation***

SoSA was founded in 1979 on Christian principles of caring for the environment; living a simple, sustainable lifestyle; and caring for the "least of these" by modeling a commonsense solution to the problems of food waste and hunger.



### ***Keeps Good Food from Going to Waste***

SoSA saves millions of pounds of fresh produce each year and donates it to feed hungry people

throughout the nation. Using the biblical practice of gleaning farm fields, they engage thousands of volunteers to pick, bag, and deliver leftover crops that would not be sold.



### ***Benefits the Environment***

SoSA keeps thousands of tons of food waste out of landfills, reducing methane gas which damages the atmosphere.



### ***Improves Health Outcomes***

SoSA supplies fresh fruits and vegetables instead of “filler food”, improving the health of our society’s most vulnerable.



### ***Offers to Act on Faith***

SoSA’s Harvest of Hope and Gleaning Network and Potato & Produce Project educates on how to live responsibly and put Jesus’ command to care for neighbors and “let nothing be wasted”.

Go Green with the Society of St. Andrew, [EndHunger.org](http://EndHunger.org).

~Submitted by Marta Pletz for the Community Care Team

Simple Living Tips are provided by the Community Care Team:  
Jill Folkmire, Chair, Kim Cook, and Marta Pletz



# All things New.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
old things have passed away;  
behold, all things have become new.  
2 Corinthians 5:17

## **From the Worship, Learning and Prayer Team**

Peace and love in this new year, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus! As we are remembering that love doesn't look the same year to year, we also recognize that what never changes is the blessing of being together, of gathering and choosing one another, of sharing ourselves and believing that no matter what form it takes, the Light of Love shines through us! We are looking with anticipation to what 2026 brings for us as a family in Christ both inside and outside of our doors, continuing to trust God for His wisdom, direction and imagination through us in the coming new year. Wishing you and yours a healthy, happy and safe New Year! (If you're able, come join us for in-person worship Sundays, 9:40 a.m. An open-arms greeting awaits you!)

# Afterschool News



As we look back on Advent, a heartfelt thanks is extended to the congregation for your ongoing support of the Afterschool program, its students, and families!

During Advent, the students participated in making mangers to recognize the birth of Jesus. They also made snowflakes to decorate the fellowship area, Christmas cards, and luminaries, a beloved Hispanic tradition originating in the Spanish custom of lighting bonfires to guide people to midnight mass.

The students' Christmas party included a video, "Mickey's Christmas Carol", making Gingerbread Houses and cookie decorating, following along a path of their handmade luminaries, a pizza party, and their Christmas stockings complete with Hearts on Fire tee shirts and Amazon gift cards.

The students will return on January 7th and you may pray for them by name as they continue to learn and grow in faith and community:

Alex, Brayden, Devyi, Emmanuel, Ikev, Jhampiere, Kenneth, Marianna, Santiago.

For the Community Care Team,  
Marta Pletz, Jacinda Rice, Georgia Feild

The Community Care Team consists of Jill Folkmire, Chair,  
Kim Cook, and Marta Pletz



**Tuesday, January 27, 2026**

## Scams and How to Protect You!

Deputy Jason Tarap from the Allegheny County Sheriff's Office will be returning to DayTimers for an updated review on what not to do and what to look for in scams that are so present in our everyday world!

Please let Linda know **by January 20** if you plan on attending, using the **contact information** below or for any questions you may have. Please note that we are in Winter Weather Advisory Conditions for January and February. If conditions are too treacherous, we will cancel the meeting on the Monday before and you should check your email for this cancellation information.

### **FUTURE MEETINGS:**

**February 24, 2026      TED Talk Presentation**

Day Timers is still participating in the **Crafton Food Pantry**. They would like us to gather items that the Pittsburgh Food Bank **Does Not Supply**. Please note that the Food Bank is asking for **Macaroni and Cheese** along with the usual **Saltine Crackers (those in a box of 4 sleeves)** and **Ramen Noodle Soup Packages**.

DayTimers will continue our assistance in supporting

Westwood Elementary's autistic class teachers with Marta Pletz as our liaison.

If you have any comments or questions, call Linda Polaski, 412-921-8605, to leave a message, or email [rpolaski@AOL.com](mailto:rpolaski@AOL.com). The church phone number is: 412-921-8444 to speak with Marta. Please check your email for any changes or updates.

Blessings,  
Linda and Rich, Kim, Marta, Bob and Mary



Dear family and friends of Mt. Pisgah...

In addition to your own prayers of thanksgiving and petitions to our most capable Father in Heaven, creator and master of all things seen and unseen, all praise and glory be to Him who reigns victorious now and throughout eternity – “O, what a Savior!”

### **Prayer Focus for January:**

***Lord of the New Creation, please send your Spirit to teach us to live as a new creation in Jesus Christ.***

Hope to see you in worship Sunday morning, 9:45 am.  
Submitted by the Worship, Learning and Prayer Team



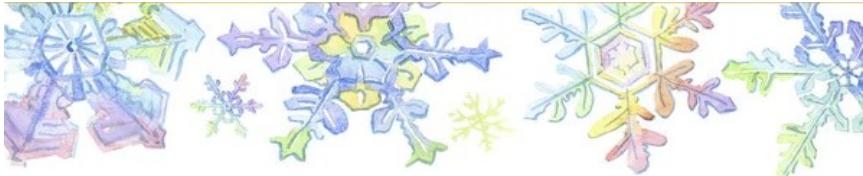
Dear Lord,

We pray for comfort for those who feel alone, and ask that we can be a source of love for them. Keep our families safe and let kindness lead our conversations.

Guide us into this New Year with Your wisdom and help us to live out the dreams You've placed in our hearts.

We are grateful for the gift of your Son, Jesus, and the hope He brings.

In His precious name, Amen.



*This prayer will appear at the end of the BUZZ each week.*

*~Submitted by Marilyn Costantino for the Prayer Team*



*Please submit February VIEW  
articles **by January 19** via email  
to [37.s.devey@gmail.com](mailto:37.s.devey@gmail.com).  
Thank you!*

# On the Lighter Side ...

Submitted by  
Sharon Devey



The Back Pew - Jeff Larson

## BLASPHEMOUS!!



After Jesus declares he will be seated at the right hand of God.. Harvey the High Priest becomes melodramatic. **Mt 26:65, Mk 14:62-63**

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I'VE BEEN DEBUGGING YOUR CREATION  
MODEL AND, NATURALLY, THERE WERE NO  
ERRORS ... WHEN I ADD THE SIN  
VARIABLE, HOWEVER, THINGS GET NASTY

## **OUR CONGREGATION CONNECTS . . .**

### **1 Thessalonians 5:16 “Rejoice Always!”**

**Who will receive a January  
birthday wish from you?**



Bless this your child, Lord, in the year to come. May they know the comfort of your presence, the certainty of your purpose, and the consolation of your love at work in their life.

8th ... Linda Polaski  
15th ... Nancy Palmerine  
17th ... Rachel Ashcraft  
(Kennedy Sevacko's mother)  
18th ... April Kanai  
18th ... Ashley Fickley  
22nd ... Don Folkmire  
24th ... Xavier Hudnell  
27th ... Laurie Porter  
31st ... Bill Pletz

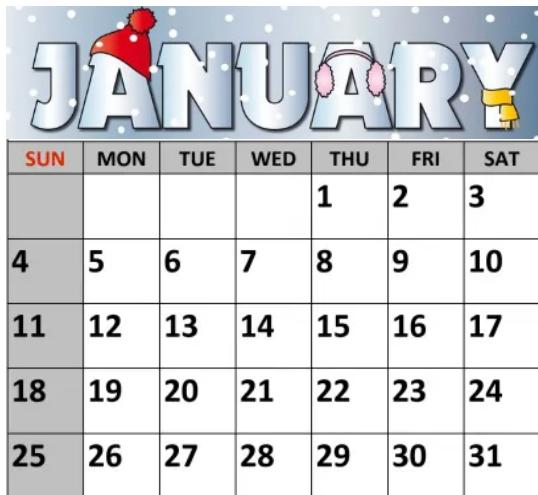
**“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good,  
to build him or her up.” Romans 15:2**

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Solution to God's Promise When You Pray from page 9:

The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. Psalms 3:15

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## *Mark your calendar . . .*

- 4th      Adult Class following worship  
SCRIP order placed
- 7th      First day of 2026 Afterschool Program
- 11th     Installation of Officers
- 18th     Adult Class following worship
- 19th     Session Meeting 6:45 pm
- 19th     February VIEW articles due (*see also page 16*)
- 25th     Annual Meeting following worship
- 25th     Worship, Learning and Prayer Team Meeting  
following worship
- 27th     DayTimers Meeting, 11:00 am (*see page 14*)

## *Weekly*

Wednesday, Prayer Group online 5:30 pm

Wednesday & Friday, After School Program, 4:10 - 6:00 pm

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