



## The Fellowship April 2024

The Monthly Newsletter of the Ebensburg Presbyterian Church



Easter Flowers added a bright touch as we remembered and honored loved ones.



### Eggstravaganza

Children had a good time playing games, making crafts, eating a snack and hunting for eggs on Saturday March 30<sup>th</sup>



### Pastor News

We are excited to welcome a student pastor under the care of Redstone Presbytery to lead us in worship for the next several months. **Pastor Danielle Kendig** will be graduating with her Master of Divinity from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in May 2024 and is on track for PCUSA ordination. Pastor Danielle lives in Johnstown with her husband (Jon), their three children, and two Goldendoodles. She has close to 20 years in ministry and worked previously as the Director of Christian Education at another church in the presbytery. Although Pastor Danielle will be with us on a part-time basis, we look forward to the leadership and compassion that have been instrumental in her ministry and her strong heart for local and global mission fields. She also enjoys painting, sewing, history, music, getting together with her family and friends, and the occasional competitive game of Rummy or Monopoly!



Welcome Pastor Danielle Kendig to our 11:00 worship service on **Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>** and meet her at Coffee & Conversation following the service.

### Bob Sheehan

We are thankful that Bob Sheehan has been leading our worship services and moderating the session meetings sharing his wisdom and sense of humor. He will continue to help our congregation and Pastor Danielle where her role as student pastor limits the scope of her ministry.

## EASTER REFLECTION

Hallelujah, He is risen! Christ is risen indeed! All around the world Christians sing, shout, and share this Good News on Easter morning. The relationship between God and his creation was broken by our desire to be like Him. It was restored by God's decision to be like us; to suffer and die for us; and to rise again with a promise that all will be restored. Jesus said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Does this promise of Jesus guide us just through Easter or all the other 364 days of the year?

Easter promises that death no longer has a hold over us. Yes, those we love will die. And we will experience that as well. But death no longer has a grip on us; or it shouldn't, if we truly believe what we're saying on Easter morning. Can we affirm Paul's claim that death has lost its sting because of the empty tomb? There's a poem that begins like this, "Birth is a beginning and death is a destination. And life is a journey." And it ends like this, "victory lies not at some high place along the way, but in having made the journey, stage by stage, a sacred pilgrimage. Our time on earth is limited and we have to make the most of it. We need to continually search for meaning, purpose, truth, and value in our lives.

Easter reminds us that we have been reborn in Christ. It reminds us that the fear of living each day to its fullest is only as strong as we believe it to be. Jesus knew all along how his sacred pilgrimage would end. On many occasions he tried to tell his disciples that his ministry would end on the cross, but not his life. It was a concept they couldn't comprehend. And even when they saw Him resurrected it took the power of the Holy Spirit to get them to live unafraid of the consequences of proclaiming the Good News to all who would listen. The power unleashed by the faith in Jesus, changed frightened disciples so that they were able to turn challenges into opportunities. They no longer feared life or death but walked confidently toward the destinations that God had prepared for them. May we respond to Easter this same way this year and every year.

How does the Easter message challenge us to live? Does it affect us at all? We aren't called to convince others of the reality of the empty tomb, but we are expected to live in that reality. We are called to change the way we think and act in the light of God's gift of eternal life. If we leave that empty tomb without being changed something is wrong. May the weight of our regrets and mistakes be lifted as we commit to follow Jesus Christ.

From Bob Sheehan



## EGGSTRAVAGANZA

Here are a few more pictures from the party and egg hunt for the children.



The letter below was to have been included in the March newsletter as requested by Pastor Owar, but there was not space at that time. The Israel/Palestine Mission Network is part of the Presbyterian Church USA Mission Network.

Date: Mon, Feb 19, 2024, at 3:39 PM

Subject: Solidarity with the Suffering: Reflection #2

Dear friends,

We arrived safely in Amman, Jordan last Friday, crossed the border into the occupied West Bank and drove up to Jerusalem 2 hours later. In the days since, we have filled every day from 8am until 9 or 10 at night meetings with local Christians to hear their stories, pray with them and try to understand the extremely painful context in which they have been called to witness.

The continuing Israeli assault on the people of Gaza is so brutal that you can see Palestinian Christians struggle to make sense of it, even after 4 months of the violence. Churches, hospitals, schools and the homes of most of the Christians (whose numbers have shrunk to only 1% of the population of Gaza) have been completely destroyed by the Israeli rocket and drone attacks. A Christian psychologist from Gaza broke down in tears when she tried to describe the accumulated trauma and its impact on young minds and hearts: "We have learned to fear the voice of the planes"-- which constantly overfly Gaza and strike terror in all the displaced Gazans.

While Gaza has dominated the headlines since October 7, the surprise to us is how the Israeli Government has ratcheted up the speed of its ongoing campaign to force Palestinians to emigrate or move off of valuable land. Groups of extremist settlers have been encouraged by the fiery language of Jewish nationalism used by Prime Minister Netanyahu and several members of his cabinet to "redeem the land", cleansing it of its non-Jewish population. The impact on Palestinian lives of the stepped-up campaign and sharp increase of settler violence has been staggering for us to witness:

Last Friday, we sat with Fakri, a 62 year old Palestinian grandfather who has lived all his life in his great-grandfather's house in the Jerusalem district of Silwan. This area of coveted Palestinian land has seen an aggressive campaign of harassment of Palestinian residents by armed Israeli gangs and the demolition of Palestinian homes. Fakri's home-- with everything he owned except the clothes he was wearing-- was bulldozed to the ground two days earlier. As we sat with him and heard his story, he said, "Even more painful than the demolition of my home was the demolition of my dreams". According to our hosts at the Sabeel Centre, 22 Palestinian homes have been demolished in 2024 in Jerusalem alone.

The American executive director of the United Nations Relief & Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said this: "October 7 was a tragic day for Israel. But the actions in Gaza are so far beyond that initial massacre that we now have a sustained massacre with extreme violence targeting primarily civilians, women, and children."

This morning, we watched in horror as a Caterpillar bulldozer (yes, made in the USA) demolished the dreams of two Palestinian families in a district of Bethlehem. We stood with the families, prayed, and sang-- and two vehicles of Israeli Government riot police arrived to "keep order", but there was no stopping the bulldozer. I'm posting video from that encounter to Facebook and Instagram.

In lengthy meetings with Palestinian Christian leaders from Bethlehem and Gaza, they wanted to know why the U.S. churches were so oblivious to their suffering. Their request? "You can help us most by praying for us and telling our story to your people."

These encounters with Palestinians have been intense and moving as our tears combined. But what keeps me awake at night is my part in all of this. A portion of my federal tax payments go to subsidizing Israel's continuing war on the people of Palestine-- the U.S. sends \$3.8 billion to the Israeli Government each year in military aid. And now I see with my own eyes what it is doing to Palestinian families.

Pray with me that a movement of justice-seekers-- Jewish, Christian, Muslim and non-religious-- would rise up in our nation to work for justice in Israel/Palestine. Below you'll find a devotional reflection written by Pastor Rick McNutt, a member of our group [Palestinians and East Jerusalem — Israel/Palestine Mission Network \(IPMN\) \(theipmn.org\)](https://theipmn.org). More soon...

With you in Christ,

Hunter Farrel

The Rev. Dr. Hunter Farrell is the former director of Presbyterian World Mission

## *What's Happening...*

The Session opened with prayer on March 11, 2024, and then heard a presentation from Rev. Skip Nofztger, the Executive Presbyter for Redstone Presbytery and from Danielle Kendig, a student pastor under the care of Redstone. Danielle told us about herself, her family, and her calling to be a pastor. Then Rev. Nofztger told us about the procedures and requirements of hiring a student pastor. The Session members were able to ask questions of both Rev. Nofztger and Danielle. Then they left the meeting and the Session members continued to discuss the possibility of hiring Danielle Kendig on a temporary part-time basis.

The members wanted time to discuss and prayerfully consider our options so it was decided that the meeting would be continued on March 18.

Two other items of timely importance were discussed. First, there was a recent inadvertent disclosure of names and physical addresses of church members. Following discussion, it was decided to notify authorities and the church members and take steps to add protection. You should receive a letter from the church about this.

Second was a reminder about the upcoming Presbytery meeting and a discussion of a representative from our session.

At that point, the meeting was suspended until March 18. On March 18, the meeting resumed with prayer, a bible reading, and Book of Order note about how we care for one another. Discussion about hiring Danielle Kendig resumed, and it was decided that we would proceed with hiring her on a part-time basis beginning April 14.

The minutes from the February Session meeting were approved with one spelling correction. Then the Treasurer's report was received.

Committee reports followed:

The Discipleship Committee reported on plans for the Eggstravaganza, Easter Flowers and Cards for shut ins. Potato Patch was also discussed.

Family Life discussed Coffee Conversations, Wheels and Wings and Mini-Golf and Potato Patch.

Mission reported on the collection for the Food Pantry (\$225), and the upcoming One Great Hour of Sharing collection on Palm Sunday.

Communication Committee discussed computer and media security issues.

Property Management reported that they will seek a 2<sup>nd</sup> bid for tree trimming.

Worship reported on plans for Palm Sunday.

In New Business, Martha O'Brien will fill the open office manager position beginning in the middle of May.

Kevin McKenrick was appointed as representative to the March 19 Presbytery Meeting.

The next stated Session meeting is April 8, 2024.



## From the Mission Committee:

Here at the Ebsenburg Presbyterian Church, we have a long-standing connection with Pine Springs Camp—many of us over several generations have had the chance to experience the beauty and connection with nature at camp, special and meaningful interactions with devoted and caring staff members, and the power of spending a week (or a summer) experiencing the life of the Spirit in a true Christian community. Because so many of us have benefitted from all of this, we are understandably eager to support the staff who give so much of themselves to the young people in their care. So, as we often do, we are answering the call to “sponsor” a counselor through prayer, notes of encouragement, and small gifts.

Last year “our” counselor was Ellyse Betler, a student at Westminster County Community College. As it happens, Ellyse is once again a counselor this summer, and she will once again be “our” counselor!

So—stay tuned! We’ll be giving more information on this project in the coming weeks!

In the meantime, please do add Ellyse (and all the staff members) to your prayers as they prepare to welcome campers in just a few short weeks.

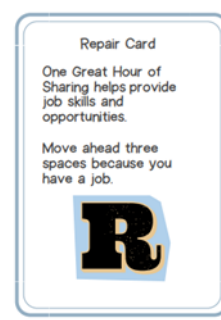
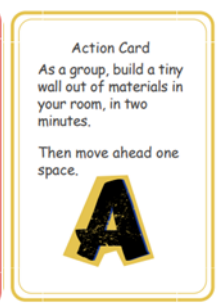
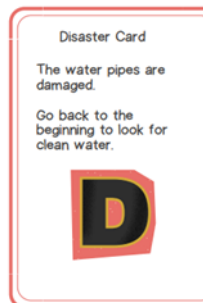
If you have any questions, please contact either the church office or any member of the Mission Committee.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Remember, if you have a camper, the mission committee is again offering “half-camperships”.

During the worship service on Palm Sunday, we played the OGHS Game and learned the ways that the OGHS offering helps those in need. Rolling the dice then following the directions on the Disaster, Action, and Repair cards the teams moved from the start point to the finish line. Thank you to Bob Sheehan for helping us to engage the congregation and dedicate the Offering.

**OGHS**— Thanks to your support, we are making a generous donation to the 2024 One Great Hour of Sharing





April 1	Austin Baker
April 5	BeenyJwok Ojha
April 8	Eva Tomb
April 11	Tina Taylor
April 13	Clifton J. Harris
April 22	Dan Orr
April 29	Ralph T. Shuey

## Celebrations

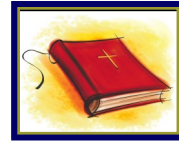
Rev. Owar Ojulu will be installed as pastor at the Grace Community Presbyterian Church in Lower Burrell April 14 at 4 pm.. You are welcome to come and witness this celebration.



## Congratulations

On March 12, Apay was sworn in as a citizen of the United States.

# Sunday Scripture Readings



**April 7, 2024**  
**Second Sunday of Easter**  
Colors: White and Gold

## Lectionary Readings

Acts 4:32–35  
Psalm 133  
1 John 1:1—2:2  
John 20:19–31

The disciples share everything and testify to Jesus' resurrection. How good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity. Walk in the light of God; confess your sins and be forgiven. Jesus shares the Holy Spirit; a week later, he appears to Thomas.

**April 14, 2024**  
**Third Sunday of Easter**  
Colors: White and Gold

## Lectionary Readings

Acts 3:12–19  
Psalm 4  
1 John 3:1–7  
Luke 24:36b–48

Peter speaks of Jesus' rejection and calls the people to repent. Answer me when I call, O God; in you I will find joy and peace. See what love the Father has given us; we are children of God. The risen Lord eats with the disciples and interprets the Scriptures.

**April 21, 2024**  
**Fourth Sunday of Easter**  
Colors: White and Gold

## Lectionary Readings

Acts 4:5–12  
Psalm 23  
1 John 3:16–24  
John 10:11–18

Filled with the Spirit, Peter challenges those who have arrested him. The Lord is my shepherd, leading, protecting, and feeding me. Love means laying down one's life for those who are in need. Jesus says: I am the good shepherd; I lay down my life for my sheep.

**April 28, 2024**  
**Fifth Sunday of Easter**  
Colors: White and Gold

## Lectionary Readings

Acts 8:26–40  
Psalm 22:25–31  
1 John 4:7–21  
John 15:1–8

Philip meets an Ethiopian eunuch, who asks to be baptized. In the great congregation I will praise the Lord, my deliverer. Let us love one another; we love because God first loved us. Jesus says: I am the vine, you are the branches; abide in me.



# Presbytery of Redstone

*Communicate the Word...*

*Carry on the Work...*

*Change the World...Together!*

## March Gathering Highlights

- **Hosted by the New Hope Presbyterian Church, the Presbytery gathered both in person and by Zoom. For those who were able to be present in person, we celebrated with dinner and recognition of Bobbie Shaffor. She is retiring after twenty-two years of service as the Administrative Assistant. Many have been served by willing and helpful spirit.**
- **Continuing our focus upon being the community of Jesus Christ in our region, the Word was proclaimed by Rev. Liddy Barlow, Executive Minister of the Christian Associates of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Redstone Presbytery has been a longtime member of this important Christian organization of Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox leaders sharing in ministry together.**
- **With the leadership of the Committee on Ministry, the existing Family and Medical Paid Leave policy was revised for pastors serving in congregations throughout the Presbytery.**
- **Since 2024, Redstone Presbytery has partnered with our siblings in Christ in Sudan and later, South Sudan. Remembering those first steps of beginning this partnership, we celebrated twenty years of sharing in God's mission around the world.**
- **Acknowledging the progress of our two ministerial candidates as they endeavor in their educational and ministry experiences, we look forward to their completion in order to join in pastoral service. Additionally, ruling elders who may be sensing a call to learn more, grow and even preach, were encouraged to consider enrollment in IPLF which will begin a new cohort in August, 2024.**
- **The Communications Team reported on their desire for others to join them who have interest in serving God's kingdom in print, design, social media, and video media. As part of their initiative, a survey is being conducted on valued uses of various Presbytery communication resources in order to better serve both our shared ministry and individual congregations.**
- **Patty Hart reported on the more recent activities of the Presbyterian Women from around the Presbytery. Women's groups from congregations around the Presbytery are invited to join in with them.**

Ebensburg Presbyterian Church  
PO Box 327  
200 N. Center Street  
Ebensburg, PA 15931

**Mission Statement:**

*“Ebensburg Presbyterians are  
Christians giving help and hope to all by shar-  
ing God’s love.”*

ebgpresby@gmail.com  
814-472-6920

**Worship Service**

Sunday Worship 11:00 AM

**Church Staff**

Pastor  
Danielle Kendig

Church Treasurer  
Kristine Segear

Clerk of Session  
Jim Stratton

Custodian  
Don Buterbaugh

Organist  
Melissa Douglas

**Web page:**

[www.ebgpresby.org](http://www.ebgpresby.org)

**Facebook page:**

Ebensburg Presbyterian Church



**EBENSBURG FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

**Year to Date as of March 10, 2024**

**Actual Operating Income: \$ 12,055.44**

**Actual Operating Expenses: \$ 17,557.84**

**Gain/Loss: \$(5,502.40)**



**2024 Per Capita**

**2024 Per Capita** - Our Per Capita offering, which supports the work of the presbytery, synod and general assembly, has been set at **\$44.00**. We are a connectional church, and we encourage you to submit your per capita as soon as possible! Just mark your envelope or the memo line on your check. We are then responsible for sending this full amount to the Redstone Presbytery. Thank you!

# April 2024

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

	<p><b>1</b></p> <p><i>Happy Birth- day Austin Baker</i></p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><i>Point of Free- dom NA Group—6 PM</i></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><i>Happy Birth- day BeenyJwok Ojha</i></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p><b>7</b> <i>Worship Service 11 am Rev. Skip Noftzger</i></p> <p><i>Boy Scouts 6–8 PM</i></p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p><i>Session Meet- ing 7 pm Happy Birth- day Eva Tomb</i></p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p><i>Point of Free- dom NA Group—6 PM</i></p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p><i>Happy Birth- day Tina Tay- lor</i></p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p><i>Happy Birth- day Clifton J. Harris</i></p>
<p><b>14</b> <i>Worship Service 11 am welcome Rev. Danielle Ken- dig</i></p> <p><i>Boy Scouts 6–8 PM</i></p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p><i>Point of Free- dom NA Group—6 PM</i></p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p><i>NA Business Mtg. 9:45 AM</i></p>
<p><b>21</b></p> <p><i>Worship Ser- vice 11 am</i></p> <p><i>Boy Scouts 6–8 PM</i></p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p><i>Happy Birth- day Dan Orr</i></p> <p><i>Earth Day</i></p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p><i>Point of Free- dom NA Group—6 PM</i></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>
<p><b>28</b></p> <p><i>Worship Ser- vice 11 am</i></p> <p><i>Boy Scouts 6–8 PM</i></p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p><i>Happy Birth- day Ralph T. Shuey</i></p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p><i>Point of Free- dom NA Group—6 PM</i></p>				



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