

From Jim:

I came to the Ebensburg Presbyterian Church while medical testing determined that Pastor Logan Potts was suffering from clinical depression. Logan, the Session and the Presbytery decided that he should take time off and then get a fresh start. At first I served week by week, then as Stated Supply, then Designated Pastor and then was finally the Installed minister.

Donna Huttenhower was my colleague in the church office, and we produced interesting newsletters. During these years the choir was led by Pat Magley, and the loft was full of multi-generational good singers. We enjoyed Fremont McKenrick's improvisations. He was organist for more than 60 years.

Three lay pastors were connected to our church: Jim Tomb, Nadine Kinkead and Bob Thokar.

I led and preached at the first ecumenical service ever held at St. Francis University. The Ebensburg newspaper was happy to promote our interesting historical services: the Scottish Presbyterian services of 1560, 1590, and 1660, and the pioneer services of 1805 and the "Church in the Wildwood" all during which the congregation experienced how worship had changed.

Of special interest were our several jazzy services on Sunday evenings which included Fremont on piano and member Dave Moorhead on woodwinds. Area musicians included Johnstown Symphony bassist Nate Santos and Jazz in Your Face trumpeter Walt McClellan.

We had a strong Adult Sunday School class led by Carol Vaughn using Kerygma material. Pat Mohny and Margaret McKenrick

led the children's classes for a time, Scott Magley taught the teenagers' class and Kris Segear led the "Joining the Church" class.

Over my 12 years, the weekday Bible studies covered major portions of the Bible.

There was an active Ministerium, and we hosted many Lenten electives which included my "Two-hour Tour of the Book of Revelation."

The Church sold its Victorian parsonage, added a main-floor restroom, and was blessed that Judge Long's Cambria County prison work crew painted our sanctuary with scaffolding set up to the dome.

Duane Mohny engineered the process of re-setting the pews.

Our women hosted area church members for a yearly Ash Wednesday breakfast and service.

Among our church activities with the community was participation in the annual PotatoFest with food sales in the parking lot and children's activities in the basement. The basement was also the site of the Easter Eggstravaganza for local kids.

A lot of wonderful Christians went to be with the Lord, and the loss of two middle-aged leaders, Bruce McKenrick and Karen Wheeler was especially sad.

I was truly blessed with my wife Sheila's participation. I retired in November 2013 as I was given a chance to write for biblicalleadership.com.

From Sheila:

My introduction to the Ebensburg congregation as Jim's fiancée was likely a surprise to church members, as it was to others in our families and among our colleagues. However, the church was welcoming and easily enfolded me into its life.

Of course, partnering with Jim in the church's worship and activities was rewarding, but in particular I remember church picnics, trash and treasure sales, Groundhog Day festivities with those crazy "brown and black" carols, and Dickens' Days when I dressed in Victorian clothes as Charles' (Jim's) wife.

But how could I forget the "Postcard Ladies" group? If memory serves me correctly, Laura McGill and Amy Brulia (and perhaps others) and I addressed dozens of cards (Hence, the name of the group.) announcing the birth of a women's group focusing on social activities. It was a success for several years and included trips to local theater presentations, area art shows and fall festivals, and we celebrated "white elephant" Christmas parties. Some activities included the men and children. These included game nights, a Halloween party when members brought a Biblical prop (ex. a ladder for Jacob), and a game with members' baby pictures. I recall several participants identified my picture as being Harold Askew's! I was bald until 18 months.

My ten years of church affiliation (Jim and I were married in 2003, and I became a member in 2006.) were blessings for me, and I treasure every friendship I made in the Ebensburg church and community.