Spring '25 PCENDOT

P C M D T QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Summer Newsletter Deadline: 05-22-25



Pastor's Letter

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Do you reread favorite books? I confess that I do.

Studies show that rereading favorite books can bring comfort when we are feeling stressed or living during the unpredictable times that happen in every life. In a story we know, with characters we might treasure like old friends, new insights and comfort are found.

Perhaps that explains my deep love for the lectionary and the liturgical year. The pattern of the year brings comfort. I can walk the lonesome valley of Lent, reflecting on my faith and my failings, precisely because I know Easter stands as a glorious testament to the power of God. The faithful, solemn journey of Lent is only possible, for me, because I know the rest of the story.

Recently, I was rereading one of the many books written by Terry Pratchett. Pratchett has a series of some 40+ books about The Disc World. There are memorable characters and the writing, improving with each new book, contains some brilliant snarky . . . satirically sarcastic skewers . . . insights into how we humans live.

In this book, Lord Vetinari, the patrician of Ankh-Morpork, is discussing some strife that has developed between the several species that live in the city he rules. And he says: "It is difficult to live in times when it is so easy to fashion opinions into knives."

Wherever we are on the political spectrum, I hear truth in that statement from a book of fiction. "It is difficult to live in times when it is so easy to fashion opinions into knives."

Recently, I was out and decided I wanted a Sausage Egg McMuffin before I went to Costco. (They are my nemesis, so unhealthy, so delicious.) The McDonalds had 2 lanes for the drive-thru. Only 1 lane had formed, and it was now long enough to block all of the handicap parking spaces. So, hoping to show others the second lane was open, I got in the second, almost nonexistent, line.

A large man got out of his pickup truck, walked up to my car, and dressed me down with language that would have even embarrassed my Army-Sargent Dad. Initially, I listened, and when he stopped to take a breath, I tried to explain I was concerned about blocking the handicap spots. He was too offended by my behavior to listen. I was grateful when his line moved forward, and others began blowing their horns so he would move his truck up.

"It is difficult to live in times when it is so easy to fashion opinions into knives."

I have been thinking about that. A lot. Often.

"It is difficult to live in times when it is so easy to fashion opinions into knives."

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2:4

Which brings me back to the approach of Lent, where I either give up a bad habit, or adopt the discipline of a new habit. This year, I believe I will concentrate on not picking up any knives. I will listen more, leave kindness behind in my wake. I will look for areas of agreement, rather than create division. I will look to see the face of Jesus Christ in others, and apologize when I fail to treat others as a beloved child of God.

It won't be easy. There seem to be any number of angry, hurting people out there. But kindness has to start somewhere. So let it begin with me.

In Christ's Name, Pastor Arlene



Holy Week

MAUNDY THURSDAY GATHERING THURSDAY APRIL 17

Passover will be held by our Jewish brothers and sisters beginning April 12 through April 20. Their Seder suppers will be celebrated the first 2 nights on April 12 and 13. (Days are counted from sundown the previous night. So Sedar will close the day's Passover activities the evenings of April 12 and 13).

The Passover Seder meal was also celebrated by Jesus and his disciples in the upper room on the night he was betrayed. Churches have often incorporated the Seder rituals in their Maundy Thursday remembrances of that night. However, care needs to be taken so that Christians exercise caution so as not to repurpose or culturally appropriate this important Jewish religious tradition.

Most churches agree it is not appropriate to celebrate a Seder if in doing so it coincides with the first two nights of Passover. Churches should also make an effort to educate attendees about why it is being included in the Maundy night remembrance. The Christian faith benefits from recognizing our deep ties to Jewish heritage, which provides the context for much of the scripture we recognize as sacred.

After careful consideration, the Worship Committee and Session have agreed to memorialize Maundy Thursday by beginning our evening with a remembrance of the Seder Jesus celebrated with his followers followed by Holy Communion.

We plan to invite the our neighbors in the community. There will be a simple meal of soup provided with an observance of the Passover meal, followed by a simple worship service that includes Communion. For the Passover meal, we will have a small plate for each attendee with a sample of the traditional Passover food.

Further details will be announced but mark your calendars now and join us for this special night on Thursday April 17.

Good Friday Tenebrae Worship Service

A very special Good Friday evening service will be held on Friday evening, April 18. Tenebrae, The Service of Shadows, will remember the final days of Jesus' life. The worship service will include readings from the Gospels and a variety of beautiful, haunting music sung by our choir and special guests.

The death of Christ is remembered through spoken word, music, prayers, and the extinguishing of light. We leave the sanctuary in silence, our hearts longing for a different ending than Jesus' body being removed from the cross and laid in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea.

Join us for this moving remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.



Pastor's Desk/Worship A Per Capita Double Feature Two for the price of one? Per Capita Is a Bargain!

The Connectional Church and Per Capita Pastor Arlene

What does per capita have to do with being a connectional church? And what is a connectional church, anyway? If you have ever wondered why we Presbyterians are so proud of being a connectional church ... keep reading.

A connectional church describes a church structure where congregations are interconnected and work together to support one another in mission and ministry. Connectionalism is defined as a network of loyalties and commitments that transcend local concerns, allowing churches to accomplish more collectively than individually.

From the early days of Presbyterian denominations (yes, there are more than a couple), we have understood ourselves as to be stronger when we are connected with one another. Recognizing connection also allows us to recognize that hierarchy and leadership are not the same thing. Our connection is centered in scripture, which reminds us that, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28). Our theology recognizes that all of us are called, all of us have gifts, and all of us are an important part of the body of Christ. Our polity emphasizes this equality by refusing to create levels of hierarchy between clergy and laity, ruling and teaching elders or elders and deacons. We resist hierarchy based on status and income as well.

Per capita began in the early 1800s. Our new nation and our denomination were growing. But there were vast differences in income. How could the denomination bring people from all over the US and its territories to its center in Philadelphia. Per capita was the answer. Each member of the denomination paid a small amount, and these funds were used to pay the costs of travel to General Assembly (GA) to assist the denomination in its work in evangelism and mission.

Today, per capita funds are still used to pay for the expenses related to travel and attendance at GA. They continue to help cover the costs of denominational offices and our efforts at mission and evangelism. Educational ideas, mission ideas, resources for worship, a newly designed web site, and the planned consolidation of resources to save money are all helped through your per capita dollars. They not only help us, but will help churches devastated by fire California. They helped rebuild after Katrina (ask Pastor Arlene about her mission trip to where Presbyterian Disaster Assistance set up work camps for volunteers). They are at work today in communities, large and small, whenever disaster happens. Per Capita makes that connections to those suffering possible. Yes, some of it is administrative, but important things happen through good administration. Your pastor must have criminal background checks completed every 5 years. Someone has to keep track of that. If you call a pastor from a different area of the country, the Presbytery checks that their credentials are in order. At a local level, Presbytery provides opportunities for support groups and gatherings of retired clergy, which can help prevent burn-out. Presbytery meetings, even the most contentious ones, remind us that we are connected.

By paying our per capita in full, we acknowledge that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, who, when connected together, can do great things that bring glory to God. Per Capita is just one of the ways that Presbyterians acknowledge that we are the Body of Christ and must care for one another.

Per Capita Thoughts Dr. Norma Mateer

Our church has wrestled with how to handle the per capita assessment to PCUSA for many years. We have handled it differently in different eras, but now we are putting it in the budget to be paid in full. Why is that a good idea? What benefit do we get from our money? Why shouldn't we just ask each person to pay?

First, let's talk about how per capita is collected in our congregation. Most recently we have asked each member to contribute the annual assessment per member. The three larger bodies of our denomination, Presbytery of Carlisle, The Synod of the Trinity and the General Assembly. This year that is \$34.04. However, asking every person to "pay their dues" seems too similar to a club asking for dues. What if a family can't afford the annual assessment? Do we exclude them from worship? Do we look at them as second-class members? No matter what our intent may be, that is often what is perceived. Having the assessment taken from the budget does not put a burden on any individual.

Per capita monies are sent to Presbytery who keeps a part of it, then passes on the rest to Synod and General Assembly. The use of that money benefits us in several ways. Our local church has received supply ministers for over a year most recently. These persons are called from a list kept current by Presbytery staff. Were we to have to do this on our own, it would mean looking up random pastors that we might know in the hope that they could lead a worship service for us. It would mean finding names and contact info on people we think might be interested – a very random and time-consuming approach.

Presbytery and by extension, all of the PCUSA organization, provide programs that we as a church could not possibly do. For instance, the Presbyterian loan group allows congregations to borrow money from a trusted, flexible foundation. They helped us find the money for the church's new furnace.

Another perc of the Presbytery is their commitment to helping churches through the transition years after a paster leaves. They have supplied us with a moderator of session. They have given us a liaison from the Committee on Ministry to help us to continue to function during that changing time.

The two executive leaders of our Carlisle Presbytery are available to help with issues that emerge in our local church. They are knowledgeable about the Book of Order and Book of Confessions. They have contacts with other church leaders across the country who share a wealth of information about modern issues that confront our congregations. Thankfully our local contributions link us with Presbyterians across the world. We are united as one Christian body.

Church Music

"Singing is good for you. Singing with others may be even better." excerpts from an article by Alexandra Moe

BUILDING SOCIAL BONDS, COLLECTIVE JOY:

"The choir met on Wednesdays in a London church, and if the Tube was on strike, it took Hazel Hardy two buses across the city to get there - but no matter. By the time she entered the hall, she says, she'd 'escaped whatever was outside,' including her cancer. The choir members, who met from 2016 to 2018, were all familiar with cancer - they were patients, caregivers and oncologists - but they didn't discuss it. They were there to sing. To have a bit of fun and meet people. For Hardy, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer shortly before joining the group, it was a 'new kind of family."

"After rehearsals, some of the singers provided a saliva sample to researchers examining whether singing affected their health and mood - and it did, positively. The 'Sing With Us' study, which enrolled Hardy and 192 others, is part of a growing body of research that points to the physical and mental health benefits of singing with others. Sing With Us linked singing in the choir to reduced stress hormones and increased cytokines, proteins that can boost the body's ability to fight serious illness. Other studies have found a connection between singing generally with lessened anxiety, stimulated memory for those with dementia, increased lung capacity and an easing of postpartum depression."

Singing in a choir supports the "total growth of the human being," says Stanley Thurston (founder and director of the Heritage Signature Chorale in D.C.), especially since choirs are families, and singing in choirs promotes social bonding, which contributes to a sense of belonging and joy. Studies show that singing in a choir creates cooperation, trust and social cohesion. About 54 million Americans sang in choirs in 2019, causing them to be more likely to vote, less lonely, more optimistic, more likely to contribute positively to their communities and to possess stronger relationships than non-singers. The inspiring beauty of texts and music causes choir members to leave rehearsals feeling, despite the day's travails, "this is a very positive thing that I can be part of."



Church Music

"It's choirs' social environment that enhances the already positive effects of singing," says Katey Warran, a research fellow in social science at University College London. Warran coordinated Sing With Us and found that "singing is calming, which produces physiological benefits, but joining a singing group is also about making 'meaningful' relationships. For example, the choir Hardy joined after her cancer diagnosis wasn't a support group, but rather a shared activity that can increase self-esteem and self-efficacy and that can produce 'more stable increases in well-being,' Warran says."

"Singing has numerous health benefits for older adults, too: fewer falls, doctor visits and prescription drugs, better social connections and better cognitive function, according to a study sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts."



Bell Choir - Wednesdays at 6:00PM

If you are interested in playing the bells, please join us. Reading music is a plus, but if you don't read music, come anyway! We will help you learn how to read your bell part if you want to join us. All will be welcomed.

Any questions, please call Glen Anderson at 717-380-4748

Chancel Choir - Wednesdays at 7:00PM

Singing with our church choir is a celebration and has endless wonderful spin-offs, you'll discover. "Oh magnify the Lord with us, and let us exalt God's Name together!" (Psalm 43:3). You are welcome to visit a rehearsal any Wednesday, 7-8:15pm in the front of the sanctuary.

We love each other and laugh a lot, and we pray together and have pizza parties.

If you are interested in finding your special niche in music-making around here, contact Marti Black, music director: 717-608-3932(c).



In December, members and friends under the direction of Mary Leisey were busy making the Christmas Candy!

Carol Wilsbach, Jean Fuss, Penny Lighty, Karen (Carol's friend),Linda Eppley, Margo Mathias, Mary Leisey, & Judy Packheiser .











The deacons welcome our new Class of 2027. New Deacons include: Gloria Agate, Jean Fuss, Margo Mathias, and Marilyn Pearce. Judy Packheiser is now an elder, but will continue to keep us informed about Property and Maintenance.

We met January 13, 2025, and Gloria Agate became our new moderator. Marilyn Pearce will serve as vice moderator. Mary Leisey will continue as secretary. The deacons meet monthly, excluding the summer months and December (unless needed).

The deacons work to support the church and congregation. Each deacon serves on one of the church committees. We also oversee a variety of church activities, including holiday flowers at Christmas and Easter and Meals on Wheels in April and October. Look for the sign-up sheet in the Narthex in March to volunteer for Meals on Wheels.

Support for our congregation includes monthly contact with our homebound and sending get-well cards to those in need. We also take turns delivering chancel flowers to deserving members to let them know that we are thinking of them and support them.



Church and all the people who support her. Deville enjoy my heautiful princette flowed, my hustard klonge whe devite to the Church. We shang in the Choirofon many years & his mother Horaine une also alor a measure ytheroir. Smiss my church. Smiss my church. Junis My church. My people who support the people who support Thank you from Carol Heiser

Carol would like to the thank the congregation for the Planter sent after her brother Chip passed away. It was a lovely planter and a very thoughtful gesture from the church family.



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Thank you again and know how much we really appriate ; t.

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Thank you Thankyou Thankyou

you're the best! Thankyarto the Deacons and All that has helped Making meals Duoing my Recovery of my Lef. IT is nice to know that guine chirch is nice to know that guine chirch fam by these one lives to take them to during these one lives to take them to during these one lives to take them to make meal. Beed a I have opened make meal. Beed a I have opened to all hostoma big help. The billing I avent to go to the descence to they

From Gloria Elberti

At 98 years old, Gloria Elberti still visits Santa!!



Below, A Farm Show Milkshake was enjoyed by church member Gloria Elberti at the Middletown Home! The lady with her is part of the staff at the Home





This year's butter sculpture featured at the farm show!

9



Harrold Bretz 2525 Bretz Drive Enola, PA 17025 717-570-8834. Birthday 07/14

Gloria Elberti 999 W. Harriburg Pike, Apt. 223 Middletown, PA 17057 717-902-1111 Birthday8/13

Betty Fisher-CARDS ONLY 1020 N Union St Oak Hill Village Personal Care 305 Middletown, PA Birthday 3/31. .

Fae Mower 999 W. Harrisburg Pike Room 222 Middletown, PA 17057. 717-546-2452 Birthday: 11/03 : 11/26

Gary & Rebecca Holman 1491 Heritage Square Middletown, PA 17057 717-939-2037 Anniversary: 11/3 Birthday Gary 03/31, Becky 04/23 Marie Leinbach 36 North Pine Street Middletown, PA 17057 717-919-7271, Birthday 05/07

Mary Lou Lewis 601 Crestview Road Hummelstown, PA 17036 717-566-6730 Birthday: 05/07

Sally Snook 625 Few Ave Middletown, PA 17057 717-944-7877 Birthday: Sally 06/02

Carol Waple 600 Freemason Dr Room. 4920 Elizabethtown, PA 17022. Birthday June 13. (If visiting, she is in Washington 4 section)



2025 Elder and Deacons





Book Study

Book Study for Lent

Lent is always a good time to explore and deepen our Christian beliefs.

Adult Forum has a wonderful program series planned for Sunday mornings in Lent on Spiritual Disciplines. It will be worth your time and energy to join us as we explore ways to deepen our faith through a variety of practices and actions.

Pastor Arlene plans to host a short 6-week class on Thursday evenings, beginning March 6. Meetings will begin at 7:00 and last about an hour. We plan to host a hybrid group of Zoom and in-person participants. This will make participation easy for those who prefer to stay at home or avoid driving in the evening, while offering an opportunity for face-to-face discussion as well.

We will be reading selected chapters of The Ethiopian Tattoo Shop by Edward Hays. It was published by Forest of Peace, a subsidiary of Ave Maria Press. Jesus often used parables, simple stories to illustrate moral or spiritual lessons, to teach. Hays follows this tradition. There are suggested refection questions for each chapter, and Pastor Arlene will also provide biblical readings that will inform our discussion. Each chapter is short and will provide interesting topics of conversation. You can plan to attend every gathering or just attend 1 or 2 as your schedule allows.

Unfortunately, the book is out of print, but copies can be purchased through used book dealers on-line. Pastor Arlene has also received permission to distribute electronic or printed copies of specific chapters to members of the group.

All Are Invited Thursday Evenings at 7:00PM Starting May 6th



Adult Forum Spring 2025

You are invited!

Sunday mornings before worship!

9:00-10:00 a.m.

MARCH 2 - Living Hope: Preparing

Spiritual disciplines are practices or habits that help deepen our faith and build spiritual strength. And they take discipline – attention and dedication – to challenge ourselves to stay committed in order to grow in our knowledge and love for God.

MARCH 9 - Praying

Prayer is the simplest and most elegant of spiritual disciplines. Nothing is needed. It is the primary avenue for reaching out and engaging with God. Anyone can pray, anytime, anywhere.

MARCH 16 - Fasting

Fasting, as a spiritual discipline, is the practice of voluntarily abstaining from food for a set period of time with the primary intention of deepening one's connection with God, seeking spiritual guidance, and demonstrating a commitment to a higher purpose by setting aside physical needs in favor of spiritual focus.

MARCH 23 – Almsgiving

While almsgiving (charitable giving) is most closely associated with Lent, almsgiving should be a year-round spiritual exercise for all Christians. Giving alms fosters a deep spiritual life because it allows us to step outside of ourselves and focus on the needs of others. How might we commit to almsgiving, the giving or ourselves to others, over the long haul.

MARCH 30 - Reading

The spiritual discipline of reading is the practice of intentionally reading texts, particularly religious scriptures, with a focus on deepening one's spiritual connection and understanding.

APRIL 6 – Harmonizing

Music has the ability to connect individuals to God, while deepening an awareness of oneself. Through its emotional impact, music creates a space for reflection, transcendence, and a feeling of unity with something greater than oneself.

APRIL 13 - Volunteering

Volunteering embodies several key Biblical principles—charity, willingness to put others before oneself, hospitality, compassion, and sacrificial love. When we engage in acts of service, we mirror the biblical call to live out our faith through tangible expressions of love and compassion.

April 20 - EASTER - No Adult Forum

April 27 - Durre Sharif

Community Relations Specialist at church World Service, Harrisburg, will update us on the current challenges facing those who work to receive and help the diminishing numbers of refugees with resettlement and integration.

May 4 - Lee Barrett

Artist and theology professor at Lancaster Theological Seminary will challenge and inspire us as he talks about New Life in Jesus according to the Visual Arts.

May 11 - Mother's Day - NO Adult Forum

May 18 - Lee Barrett Returns

Artist and theology professor at Lancaster Theological Seminary will challenge and inspire us as he talks about New Life in Jesus according to the Visual Arts.

Insights and Advice for Aging Gracefully

1. Do something you enjoy every day. When you immerse yourself in things you enjoy, you can't wait to do them again. And then you do them again, and again and again, and the enjoyment continues.

2. Work at friendships. Friendships are fuel, providing energy, love and feeding your emotions. You're never too old for new friendships.

3. Congratulate yourself. Everyone has accomplishments: celebrate them and use them as inspiration for new ones.

4. Embrace change. Life is change. Resisting it wastes precious time and energy. Living for it can create adventures you never thought possible.

5. Learn. Exercise your brain continually.

6. Know yourself. You know best what you like and don't like, and you have the power to emphasize the good.

7. Make your home your special place by personalizing it and making it comfortable. Everyone needs a refuge that's uniquely theirs.

8. Realize that opportunities often express themselves in ways we'd never imagine.

9. Get a massage frequently. Touch feels good and it's so relaxing.

10. Be gentle with yourself. Listen to your own inner voices and senses and do what makes you feel best.

11. Share happiness. Make a point to spread joy whenever possible. It feels good to make someone else feel good, and it's very inexpensive to do.

FROM THE PARISH NURSE, Jane Neff

12. Eat with friends and family. Prepare food together. Eat the things you like.

13. Eat smartly, but every once in awhile line up a row of warm chocolate chip cookies (or your favorite cookie) and dip them in milk.

14. Get sufficient rest. Living takes work; we all need a break. Take one whenever you need to.

15. Laugh and cry. But laugh a lot more. It feels good by releasing endorphins – the body's natural feelgood chemicals.

16. Each morning before you get out of bed thank the Lord for 5 things for which you are grateful. It's a nice way to start the day, and you'll find yourself thinking about a lot more than

17. Take control of how you react to things. Little things can really bring you down if you let them. But you don't have to let them.

18. Smile a lot.

19. Pray daily.

20. Spend time with other generations. You can learn something new from someone of any age.

21. Write. Write a letter. Write a blog. Write a poem. Write a journal. Writing helps you think, express who you are, and generate new ideas.

22. Embrace technology. The internet can take you places you'd never otherwise see or experience.

23. Dress in current styles. By adding a trendy piece to a classic outfit, you will look and feel good.

24. Travel. Whether it is a trip to the mall, theater, a sports event or even a different state or country, little and big adventures can produce wonderful results.

25. Exercise. It feels good to get those endorphins jumping.



CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

MARCH

Rose Ann Yeich 3/1 John Lauffer 3/1 Matt Eppley 3/1 Noah Yeich 3/9 Brian Yeich 3/10 Joan Wynn 3/15 John Lloyd Dodson 3/16 Lyla Rose Waple 3/12 John Dodson 3/18 Lori Yeich 3/29 Betty Fisher 3/31 Gary Holman 3/31 APRIL Nansi Grabill 4/1 Mary Ellen Baer 4/2 Kristin Swartz 4/5 Erika Lauffer 4/6 Kylie Dixon 4/7 Linda Hickoff 4/22 Becky Holman 4/23 Jane Neff 4/23 MAY Nancy Sours 5/1 Atah Akakpo-Martin 5/6 Mary Lou Lewis 5/7 Marie Leinbach 5/7 Alton Akakpo-Martin 5/18 Charles Wynn 5/23 Mary Leisey 5/29 Terry Basehore 5/30 Brett Waple 5/30

ANNIVERSARIES

MARCH Carol & Jay Wilsbach 3/6

APRIL

Judy & Don Packheiser 4/12 Tammie & Warren Dodson 4/16

Psalm 95:2-3: Let's come before him with thanks! Let's shout songs of joy to him!



HOLIDAYS

April 18 - Good Friday May 27 - Memorial Day



Announcements

Holy Week

PALM SUNDAY Sunday, 04/13/25

MAUNDY THURSDAY Thursday, 04/17/25

GOOD FRIDAY Friday, 04/18/25

EASTER SUNDAY Sunday, 04/20/25

CHOCOLATE EASTER EGGS

It's Easter egg time We have started making eggs. We need your help. Here are the times that we will be meeting. This is our schedule the entire time we will be producing eggs.

Monday at 8 am - This is the mixing crew. Margo Mathias leads this process.

Monday at 1 pm - We weigh the mixture and form them into eggs. This group will meet in the Fellowship Hall. You can sit to do this step. Linda Eppley leads this group.

Tuesday at 8 am - The eggs are dipped in chocolate and trimmed. Carol Wilsbach leads this group. Tuesday at 1 pm - The eggs are wrapped and bagged. This group also meets in the Fellowship Hall. You can sit doing this part of the process. Judy Packheiser heads this group.

Please consider helping our congregation. The money we make from this project greatly assists our congregation.Please reach out to the group leader or Linda Eppley with any questions



Easter flowers will be available to order from the Deacons. Stay tuned for an order form and details to come!

Stay in the Know!

Our Presbyterian USA denomination website has been redesigned and is full of information. Take time to read it.

To see our newly designed denomination, just enter: www. pcusa.org

Other websites to check out that have not changed:

For our Presbytery of Carlisle: www.carlislepby.org

For our Presbyterian Congregation of Middletown: www.pcmdt.org

"Fill body of Christian people who reach out to others by sharing God's word, love, and fellowship."

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