

Spotlight on Glenville Presbyterian Church

By John Koerner, Clarksburg First Presbyterian

It was my privilege as a member of the Presbytery's Relations Committee to visit recently with the session and pastor of [Glenville Presbyterian Church](#). Although they are a small church with an average worship attendance of 22 and about 26 members on the roll, God is doing great things through them. They are an [Earth Care Congregation](#), and one of their latest projects is the Sacred Garden, which has a labyrinth and space for spiritual meditation. The sign in the background has the inscription below:

Our Sacred Garden

Where beauty, love, and peace grow

Invited, Welcomed, Accepted

A gift to the community, envisioned by the congregation,
and completed by Brennan Hargis and Kayla Walsh in 2018



In addition, they have a small wildlife habitat garden in front of the church. They practice recycling and composting and are in the process of having solar panels installed on the church roof.

The church is located at the edge of town and has big, beautiful lawns in front and back. They host the Glenville State College marching band summer camp on their grounds. They feed all the band students the first day of camp. They also provide meals for the band students who live off campus and don't have access to the college cafeteria for the rest of the week.

The church's signature event is "Band Bash," an annual, free event that occurs the Friday after the college students start back to classes. It is open to the community and features a preview of the marching band show, plus food, children's activities including a Bouncy House, and a nonprofit resource fair. The church purchases, makes and serves the food; puts on the children's activities; secures the Bouncy House; gets volunteers; and arranges for parking at a nearby parking lot so they can be shuttled over. Glenville State College provides big tents, as well as the shuttles.

The church offers choral scholarships to the college students, and as a part of that scholarship, the students serve as the church choir for Sunday morning services.

As a part of her call, Pastor Karen Kinney has an active presence on the college campus and in the town of Glenville. Her activities this last month include leading campus ministry at The Rusty Musket, attending band and music concerts at the college, attending various civil events, attending a community assessment meeting at the Senior Center, going to the Glimer County High School band concert, taking part in a clergy group lunch, and attending Kristie Taylor's chamber recital.

As with most churches, worship is at the center of what they do at Glenville Presbyterian Church. Glenville is an open, inclusive, and accepting congregation. They report that the Holy Spirit is alive and well in every worship service. The college students often express how much they feel loved and accepted by the congregation. Pastor Karen preaches great messages. They enjoy the artistic elements in worship, with lots of banners, a quilt, paintings, and more. They have a back corner of the sanctuary where the children can go and work on different quiet activities during worship; the activities are tied to the sermon topic for the day.

Members of the congregation are also active in the community. They are committed to reaching beyond their walls. They serve breakfast each year for the Belles and their companions, who are part of the WV State Folk Festival. They have a benevolence fund to help those in need and take up collections for school supplies, warm clothes, and cleaning supplies. Their building is used to provide space for Substance Abuse Coalition meetings, Girl Scout meetings, baby showers, and more. One of the college fraternities uses the church parking lot to gather together, and the fraternity members are in turn glad to help out when the church needs extra muscle.

I have deliberately focused on the positive aspects of ministry at Glenville. In fairness, I will add that they struggle with problems common to all small congregations. They struggle with financial limitations and a lack of enough volunteers. They long to be able to build an addition onto their building and to provide Sunday school classes for all ages. A church van is also on their wish list, and, of course, someone to drive the van.

They are encouraged that God has opened the way for them to share their pastor with the Trinity United Methodist Church close by. They hope that this will lead to combining resources in other areas, such as children's ministry and Sunday school.