

## Spotlight on Mannington First Presbyterian Church

By John Koerner, Clarksburg First Presbyterian

I recently visited with the session of the First Presbyterian Church of Mannington. They pride themselves on their relaxed hospitality. “We are a very open, warm, come-as-you-are congregation,” they told me. I certainly felt welcomed, accepted, and put at ease.

Although they average only about 11 people for their worship services, they have several children who come. Also, it is not unusual for kids from the neighborhood to come into the service. Sometimes, the neighborhood kids come in the middle of the service. That is OK too. They obviously feel very welcome.



One of the church’s signature events is giving out free cups of hot chocolate to trick-or-treaters. They set up a tent by the street, string up some lights, dress up a bit, hand out hot chocolate, and chat with the children and adults who stop by. Everyone has a great time. Last year, they gave out more than 400 cups of hot chocolate and lots of love.

Mannington First has a rich tradition for Christmas. Each year, the children put on a play. It is a very important event in the life of the church community.

Although the church does not have anyone to play the piano during worship services, they do have a number of very musically talented people. Sometimes, they sing to recorded music; other times, they sing without accompaniment.

The church is unique in that its Sunday worship service is at 6 p.m. This enables them to acquire the services of preachers who regularly preach somewhere else on Sunday morning. Rev. Rebecca Mihm, who is their moderator and the pastor of the Fleming Memorial Presbyterian Church in Fairmont, preaches for them on the Sundays that they have their session meetings. Rev. Chris Mullett, past Executive Director of the Clarksburg Mission and current director of the Epilepsy Foundation of West Virginia, preaches for them twice a month. The other Sundays are filled with different preachers from the area.

The church always has a booth at the annual October Fest event. They sell baked goods and give out information about the church.

Among their wishes for the church is the ability to reach out and bring in more members. They also wish for enough money to do extensive restoration and repair work on their old building. Dealing with the building is one of their biggest challenges.

The work on the current church building was started in 1903, and the building was dedicated in 1905. That was about the same time that the father of current clerk of session Phil Prichard was born across the street from the church. Phil's father would grow up in the Mannington church and go on to become an ordained Presbyterian Minister of the Word and Sacrament. After he retired, Rev. Prichard returned to Mannington and pastored the church for about 10 years.