

First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem

Please keep in prayer...



May 8, 2026

FOR THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE

The Family and Friends of Bernie Edelman
The Family and friends of Margaret (Peg)
Hoerner
The Family and Friends of Edward Donoghue

FOR THOSE IN MILITARY SERVICE

Jerry Holmes
Ashton Bevans
Everette Bevans

Continuing Need of Prayer:

Betsy Laylon (friend of Froy Thompson); Nancy Becker; Ken Bennetch; Joshua Meeks; Mark (brother of Sandy Cooper); Matt Hess; Tom Roney (husband of Judy Rance-Roney); Jakob (friend of Froy Thompson); Erin Sgeskal (daughter of Wayne Kelly); Zeke (grand-nephew of Sharon Smith); Bill Parton; Michelle Pike (Theresa Kelly's daughter); Cathy (friend of May Dudding); Yvonne Wenger; Jesse (family of Jo-Ellen Darling's brother); Sidney (grand-daughter of Ginny and Richard Smith); Pam (friend of Ginny Smith); Kristine Green (daughter of Pam Morgan); Jeaniene Eisenberg; Bryan (family member of Ginny Shunk); Greg (brother of Leslie Pohl); Fred Harvey; Hilary (friend of Pam Morgan); Kitty Willis (sister of Ruth Willis); Ann, Ruby, and Owen (daughter and grandchildren of the Swanks); Jack Walker; Geri Winchester; Fred and Ginny Shunk; Kathy Thomas; The Hirsch Family

PRAYER REQUESTS: Send to prayer@fpc-bethlehem.org or call 610-867-5865 and leave a message.

Session Report: March 2026

Class of 2026:

Kari Keyock (2nd term)

Kim Miner (2nd term)

Rich Hjorth

JoAnne Turcotte (2nd term)

Class of 2027:

Jennifer Cole (2nd term)

Jeanne Hunsicker

Allison Masters

Donna Taggart (2nd term)

Class of 2028:

Linda Filipovits (2nd term)

Ted Masthay (2nd term)

Aileen Williams (first full term)

Call to Order with Prayer

The meeting was held by Zoom videoconference. It was opened with prayer at 6:03 p.m.

Devotion: Our Stories in Pictures and Words

We discussed these questions:

In doing your story, what surprised you? What gave you comfort? What gave you pause?

A motion to give Jim Halkins voice was seconded, and carried.

Clerk's Report

Communion was celebrated on March 1.

Deaths

Jon Conrad - Feb. 27

E-votes:

March 5: A motion to approve hosting the Saturday, August 15, 2026 Mountain Laurel Presbytery Meeting was approved unanimously. Pastor Karen notified the Presbytery.

March 11: A motion from the Session to approve appointing Sheldon Cooper as signer of rental contracts was seconded. The motion carried.

Session affirmed the two e-votes.

Pastor's Report – Karen Kinney, Transitional Pastor

Current transition and other efforts:

1. The new bylaws were approved on March 1 by the congregation. I will be meeting with the Fund Endowment Committee in April to discuss how to restructure them as the hope is to have them report to the Finance Committee. Property will also now report to Session so we will be sending their minutes to the Clerk as well.

2. Though the Annual Meeting went well, and I believe it helped to be transparent about the financial needs of our building and the inability of the endowment to continue covering shortfalls in future years, it also caused some folks to feel like they had been sandbagged or manipulated into making the decision to sell the building. This was not my intention but my role as Transitional Pastor is to help the leadership and the congregation face hard truths. I will try to follow up with folks who feel like this.
3. The Mission Study team has been meeting consistently and are doing wonderful work. They will have a report each Session meeting. I continue to staff and help guide the team as needed. They are meeting weekly, taking Holy Week off.
4. The nominating committee has begun its work to fill out a 1-year, 2-year, and two three-year terms. They will have a report this meeting as well. We will need to schedule a congregational meeting to elect them.
5. The Next Chapter Preschool team has begun to meet, with the priority to find new space for the Preschool. There have been many suggestions, but follow up has not produced any viable options as of yet, but more possibilities are in the pipeline. JoAnne Turcotte and Lisa Todd are co-leading that team and have submitted minutes of the first meeting. They will meet every other week for the time being.
6. I will be working on a sermon series post-Easter that begins to deal with some of the issues and themes that are arising from the congregation decision on February 15. Steve Simmons has offered to work with me on developing broad themes and appropriate Scripture.
7. I continue to meet weekly with staff and work on operational and administrative duties.

Finance Committee Report

Jim Halkins presented the financial report. A motion to accept the financial report as presented was seconded. The motion carried.

Continuing Business

Steering Committee Update - Lindsey gave an update on the work of the Mission Steering Committee's continuing work to finalize the plans that have been presented. The timeline will likely have to be adjusted, but that was expected.

Deacon Update – Jane Masters reported that Cindy Simmons has prepared kits for home Communion. Cindy plans to step down as Pastoral Associate for pastoral care at the end of May.

Nominating Committee – Allison Masters reported. A motion to appoint Aileen Williams as Co-Chair of the Nominating Committee was seconded. The motion carried. Jim Halkins has agreed to serve a one-year term. He will be installed in a called congregational meeting. The Nominating Committee will add a 1-year, a 2-year, and a 3-year term to Session, as well as choose someone to fulfill Jon Conrad's unexpired term. When the Mission Study is done, the Committee will nominate a Pastor Search Committee.

Mission Study Update - Pastor Karen said that there were about 20 attendees at last Saturday's (March 21) gathering to discuss our feelings on losing our beloved building. The work will continue in April with meetings for visioning the future. Lindsey said that the staff will meet in a week to identify preliminary next steps that should lead to more detail.

New Business

Next Chapter Team Updates - JoAnne spoke of the next chapter team at the Preschool. Lisa Todd and Lindsey are visiting possible sites for both the church and the Preschool. Teachers are identifying inventory items to take, sell or donate, or discard. Lisa will send a weekly parent/teacher update email. The team will meet biweekly.

Worship Committee - They moved to start the summer season of one weekly service at 10 a.m., beginning on May 17. The motion carried.

Library - Leslie Pohl requested that Session approve allowing the local American Association of University Women (AAUW) to pack up and remove books from our library for their book sale. Session approved the request.

May meeting date - The May meeting would fall on Memorial Day, so Session approved a change to May 18.

Adjourn in Prayer

A motion was made to adjourn with prayer. The motion was seconded and carried by common consent. The meeting closed with prayer at 7:35 p.m.

The next Session meeting will be held on April 27, 2026 via Zoom videoconference.

The next Presbytery meeting will be Saturday, May 16, 2026.