Mason First Presbyterian Church

The
CORNERSTONE

You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone. Ephesians 2:19-20

January 2026

Worship on the Lord's Day: Sacrament

(Continuing a discussion of various elements in the worship service)

Theology of Baptism (continued from November's issue of *The Cornerstone*)

Baptism enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God's redeeming grace offered to all people. Baptism is at once God's gift of grace, God's means of grace, and God's call to respond to that grace. Through Baptism, Jesus Christ calls us to repentance, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through Baptism, the Holy Spirit gives the Church its identity and commissions the Church for service in the world.

Baptism is the bond of unity in Jesus Christ. When we are baptized, we are made one with Christ, with one another, and with the Church of every time and place. In Christ, barriers of race, status, and gender are overcome; we are called to seek reconciliation in the Church and world, in Jesus' name.

Both believers and their children are included in God's covenant love. The baptism of believers witnesses to the truth that God's gift of grace calls for our grateful response. The baptism of our young children witnesses to the truth that God claims people in love even before they are able to respond in faith. These two forms of witness are one and the same Sacrament.

God's faithfulness to us is sure, even when human faithfulness to God is not. God's grace is sufficient; therefore Baptism is not repeated. There are many times in worship, however, when we may remember the gift of our baptism and acknowledge the grace of God continually at work in us. These may include: profession of faith; when participating in another's baptism; when joining or leaving a church; at an ordination, installation, or commissioning; and at each celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Baptism marks the beginning of new life in Christ. The new way of life to which God calls us is one of deep commitment, disciplined discernment, and growth in faith. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, given with and through Baptism, equip and strengthen us for the challenges of Christian faith and life.

Baptism is ordinarily celebrated on the Lord's Day in the gathering of the people of God. The presence of the covenant community bears witness to the one body of Christ, into whom we are baptized. When circumstances call for the administration of Baptism apart from public worship, the congregation should be represented by one or more members.

As there is one body, there is one Baptism. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes all baptisms by other Christian churches that are administered with water and performed in the name of the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

— from The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "Directory for Worship"

(continued next month)

Session Synopsis

Session welcomed Elder-elect Suzanne Lang. Suzanne will be officially installed along with second term electees Monte Shuck, Mary Garland Jackson, and Greg Lang as the Session Class of 2028 at the January 11th Worship Service.

Session members were provided a schedule of 2026 training opportunities to comply with Presbyterian mandated requirements to keep abreast on boundary training, sexual harassment, and abuse policies. Ordained leaders (Pastors and Ruling Elders) are required to attend refresher training every 3 years.

The Clerk of Session reported the adjustments to the Active Member roll to 136 members after the deaths of JoAnn Caltrider and Jenny Bond this past month.

The Deacons reported supporting 4 families (a total of 11 children) and 10 senior citizens at Jefferson Square and Kiwanis Village with Christmas baskets.

The Presbytery adopted an Anti-Racism Policy at the December stated meeting. Each congregation is to also adopt such a policy. We have done this already.

The Finance committee reported on exceeding 2025 budget line expenses, especially Administration expenses. Unexpected repairs to the flat roof sections, twice for office HVAC repairs, and main unit HVAC repair were the primary causes for excess maintenance expenses. Alternate measures from use of other funds and budgeting for the unexpected were discussed to minimize future budget overruns. Session approved a 2026 balanced General Fund Budget of $390,398, a 12% increase above the 2025 budget.

The Parish Life Committee reported a good pie sale in November. The committee also provided a Wednesday evening Thanksgiving dinner and Christmas dinner in addition to 3 funeral luncheons this month.

There were no security incidents reported this month. A third security team member will be on duty at the heavily attended Christmas Eve service.

The Personnel Committee conducted an annual review of the Sexual Harassment and Child Protection policies. There were no recommended changes to the policies.

The Spiritual Growth Committee reported the re-scheduling of the youth Christmas pageant to the December 21st service due to inclement weather the previous week.

The Administration committee will be coordinating CPR/AED training for staff and security. Details and schedule are pending. The 32 new chairs for recent funerals were purchased by the Women's Association and will remain available for overflow seating in the Memorial Room, when needed. The committee is considering another day and time for their meetings.

The Worship and Music Committee will be seeking volunteers to remove the holiday decoration greens on January 10th.

The Mission Committee reported their monthly disbursements to local area mission needs. A review and adjustments were made to earlier contributions made to Compassion International and U-Kirk. U-Kirk will be notified of the passing of Jenny Bond, our past representative to the U-Kirk Board of Directors.

The Bridge Builders Task Force will be submitting for Session review a description for Safe Space discussions, and invitations for congregational participation.

Clerk of Session
Bruce F Archer

Deacons

Happy New Year! We ended 2025 with a successful annual Christmas Basket project. Thanks to your wonderful and generous support, we were able to make Christmas a little merrier for four local families, including eleven children and ten seniors.

We remember the care and concern shown to so many in need of some TLC during 2025, with phone calls, visits, cards, flowers, and meals. We are grateful for the many important projects we were able to support because of your continuous generosity. It is a blessing to be part of such a caring church family and we thank you!

Please continue to pray for those in our church family that are in need of our love, care and support.

Parish Life

Birthdays in January

Rod Guy	1/5	Isaac Reyes	1/26
Sandy Diehl	1/15	Sloane St. George	1/27
Dale Miihlbach	1/17	Timothy Pinches	1/28
Bill Leutscher	1/24	Linda Myall	1/29

Presbyterian Social Witness: Compensation in Church and Society

This is the twelfth part of a series exploring different aspects of our church's social witness policy.

These policies address matters of pay equity, just compensation, and fairness in ministerial compensation.

1. God's Work in Our Hands: Employment, Community, and Christian Vocation (1995)

Work, both paid and unpaid, is an integral part of the believer's response to God's call, the call to vocation in God's world. Good work should reflect the principles of justice on which the church's witness is based, and is described as full, fair, participatory and sustaining. The heart of the policy statement is its "Principles of Vocation and Work" which include the church's role as "model employer," fair compensation, human dignity and non-discrimination, and collective bargaining rights. Recommendations include economic planning for full employment, economic conversion, better worker protections, and fairness in downsizing.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/gods-work-in-our-hands-1995.pdf (71 pages)

2. God's Work in Women's Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation (2008)

The goal of realizing equity in the church and the world for all of God's children is sealed in Scripture, rooted in the Reformed tradition, and consistently mandated in Presbyterian policy statements. In the church and in the world today there is a disturbing disparity in how people who work are compensated for their labor. Particularly distressing is the pay disparity that exists based on gender and race/ethnicity. As people who believe and proclaim that vocation is a gift from God, pay inequity stands as a sinful violation of God's covenant with all of humanity.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/pay_equity_and_just_compensation.pdf (44 pages)

3. Neither Poverty Nor Riches: Compassion, Equity, and the Unity of the Church (2010)

This report seeks to "provide theological guidance to church and society with regard particularly to the impact of secular market assumptions on the compensation practices of the PC(USA)." It contains recommendations for building solidarity in the ministry by lessening inequality and increasing accountability in presbyteries and in Louisville. The study section looks carefully at Calvin and Reformed principles and at the varied policies of the six General Assembly agencies.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/compensation-policy.pdf (52 pages)

4. Fairness in Ministerial Compensation: Solidarity and Incentives (2014)

How can we raise the salaries of ministers in churches barely able to pay Board of Pensions' dues, including disproportionate numbers of women and racial ethnic pastors, and of what relevance is our theology of compensation to our modified market system, both in the parishes and in our national agencies? The report outlines certain forms of mutual accountability and intervention for declining ministry situations. This report combines Gospel solidarity with realism about an enduring challenge.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/fairness_in_ministerial_compensation.pdf (16 pages)

I would encourage you to pick one or more of these documents to read and study.

Worship & Music

January 2026 Worship Calendar

January 4	Second Sunday of Christmas	Communion
January 11	Baptism of the Lord	Renewal of Baptismal Vows Ordination and Installation of Deacons and Elders
January 18	Second Sunday after Epiphany	Children's Sermon
January 25	Third Sunday after Epiphany	Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering

January 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Financial Report through November 30, 2025

General Fund Balance: January 1, 2025	0
Income through November	$ 355,626
Expenses through November	$ 347,407
Ending Balance	$ 8,219

General Fund Balance 11/3/2025	$ 9,919
Revolving Accounts Balance	$ 87,159
Reserve Accounts Balance	$ 47,184
Investments as of 11/30/2025	$ 580,178
Net Financial Position (11/30/2025)	**$ 724,440**

Anticipated pledged income through November
$244,735
Actual pledged income through November
$274,562

Find the latest, up-to-date church calendar at masonpresbyterian.org

WORSHIP AT
MASON FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In-Person and Livestreaming at 10:00am each Sunday

Bulletin Submissions are due by 12:00 PM every Wednesday. Submissions for *The Cornerstone* are due by noon on the 20th day of every month. *Please be prompt. Late submissions may not be honored. We are attempting to publish the newsletter the week following Session.*

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

The CORNERSTONE

Mason First Presbyterian Church
MINISTERS - All Members
PASTOR - Rev. Bill Pinches
PARISH ASSOCIATE - Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus
PASTOR EMERITUS - Rev. Charlie Herrick
SPIRITUAL GROWTH DIRECTOR - Lori Filka
SANCTUARY CHOIR DIRECTOR & BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR - Deb Melse
OFFICE MANAGER - Jessica Tessman
FINANCIAL SECRETARY - Becky Moots
CHORAL MUSIC ACCOMPANIST - Yinzhe Li ("Ashlyn")
SEXTON - Eric VanDyke
ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR - Michelle Mackey

ELDERS:
2026 - Bruce Archer (*Clerk of Session*), Ginnie Gibson, Jane Hamelink, Tim Hammond.
2027 - Travis Archer, Evelyn Tayong, Dan Baker, Steve Sowles.
Elders-Elect: Mary Garland Jackson, Greg Lang, Suzanne Lang, Monte Shuck.

DEACONS:
2026 - Ron Dlouhy, Bill Leutscher, Sandy Leutscher, Nancy Sue MacDonald, Laurie McGonigal.
2027 - Donna Archer, Rick Cote, Sally Hughes, Debbie Johnson, Issie Nielson.
Deacons-Elect: Sandy Diehl, Pattie Yanz, Torrie Yanz.