



Sunset Hills

M E S S E N G E R

October 2024

In this Issue

- Message From Pastor Laura 1
- Reformation Prayer 2
- Music Notes 3
- Days for Girls 4
- Reformation Sunday 5
- Mission Opportunities 6
- Trick or Treat Party 7
- October Information 8-9
- Sunset Hills Book Club 9



Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church

900 Country Club Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15228
(412) 561-6261

www.shupchurch.org

Rev. Dr. Laura Strauss
revlaurastrauss@gmail.com

Karin Schein, Office Administrator
sunsethillschurch@gmail.com

Shelby Gracey, Music Director
sgracey@verizon.net

Michelle Brumfield, Nursery School
sunsethillsnurseryschool@gmail.com

A Message from Pastor Laura

"Prayer is an earnest and familiar talking with God."

—John Knox, Founder of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland (1514-1572)



John Knox’s words might seem unremarkable today, but five centuries ago, they were revolutionary. In Knox’s time, the Roman Catholic Church held a dominant role in Scotland, where priests acted as intermediaries between God and the faithful. Engaging in Protestant practices could lead to serious repercussions. Yet Knox was unwavering in his conviction that every Christian should have direct access to Scripture in their own language and the freedom to pray to God personally.

On Reformation Sunday, October 27, we honor both this transformative theology and our denomination’s rich Scottish heritage. As someone who isn’t Scottish, I want to emphasize that our celebration is not about individual Scottish ancestry but about acknowledging and celebrating the foundational beliefs that unite us.

We invite you to join us in this celebration by donning plaid and enjoying the lively sounds of bagpipes at the start and close of our worship service. Following the service, we will gather for a potluck luncheon—a cherished tradition in our Presbyterian gatherings.

A special highlight of our Reformation Sunday is the Blessing of the Kirken during worship. In Scottish tradition, 'kirken' means church, and this tradition involves blessing every household within the congregation for the year ahead. Whether your household is large or small, we encourage you to invite your loved ones to join us for this meaningful event.

Finally, please find a Reformation Day prayer included in this edition of the Messenger (prayer can be found on page 2). Crafted by Rev. Chris Currie for The Presbyterian Outlook, it thoughtfully reflects our Reformation heritage, our commitment to embracing our Roman Catholic neighbors as friends, and our shared journey forward.

In Christ’s Joy,
Pastor Laura

Reformation Prayer

A Reformation Prayer By the Rev. Chris Currie

O Lord our God, on Reformation Sunday we remember the complex legacy of our church. Grant us the internal space to view the ancestors of our faith as their whole selves, gifts and sins together. We remember the courage and stubborn boldness of Martin Luther but cannot reconcile his faith and passion with his fervent antisemitism. We remember the attention to detail of John Calvin, who taught that the church has a responsibility to care for all of society from sewers to schooling. Yet we also confess Calvin's penchant for policy sometimes made Geneva a rather dreary place without nuance for Anabaptists. We remember the boldness of John Knox, who took a stand in the political realm even venturing to lecture monarchs. And we acknowledge his iconoclasm and puritanical impulses left little room for faithful artistic expression.

We give thanks for the beautiful legacy of the Reformation: for the resurgence of the humanities and the gift of reading Scripture and offering our prayers to you in our own tongue, for the examples of those who resisted government overreach and abuse of power, for those who stayed true to their conscience in the face of great loss. We carry these lessons with us knowing they came at a great cost.

Before you, we also name those unsung heroes of the Reformation, women like Marguerite de Navarre and Katharina von Zimmern, who offered gifted insight and political protection to those who might otherwise have been put to death violently or left unable to carry out their reforms.

On this Reformation Sunday, we also pray for harmony across denominations, knowing that unity is central to your being. We pray for our Roman Catholic siblings in Christ, alongside other ecclesial traditions, confessing that in many cases, it is mainly culture, political polarization, and familial customs that separate us more than differences in doctrine, practice, or the source of our common faith in Jesus Christ.

Teach us, O God, that perhaps the greatest lesson of the Reformation comes to us from Calvin's unmarked grave. Preserve us from our desire for earthly monuments, keep us from wasting our precious time wringing our hands over ecclesial self-preservation, and re-direct us from worshipping the past and enshrining our dead heroes. Through the gift of baptism, you have not only called clergy or special Christians or only some of us, but you have called each one of us to use our God-given gifts to reflect your grace and glory, to impact this world for Christ's sake, and to engage in activities that enable our neighbors to thrive and flourish in this world you so love.

To that end, help us to rejoice in the legacy of the Reformation, to be a church that embraces our role in the public sphere alongside Christians of other traditions and people of other faiths. In our life together, make us an ever-closer likeness of your beloved community. And outside the walls of our community of faith, enable us each to pursue a life, not of completion, but one that looks to the future with confidence that your Holy Spirit will bring all things to their proper end. Until then, may we be "reformed and being always reforming," not as a principle in and of itself, but according to your Word, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Music Notes

By Shelby Gracey

We're always so happy to welcome back the Chancel Choir in September after their summer break! We also want to officially welcome two of our newest SHUP members, Ted & Patience Bergfelt, to our choir ranks. Welcome to the "choir family," Ted & Patience!

During this time in our nation's history, never have we seemed so divided as a country. Our celebration of World Communion Sunday on October 6 is a good time to reflect on the unity of the church. Perhaps the unified spirit of our churches can help to spread unity throughout our country, which can eventually extend world-wide. While it's a tall order, it's something we should all strive for.

"The local church has been described as a laboratory where believers learn to love one another regardless of color, nationality, or financial status. Our common heavenly citizenship is the one dominant tie that binds our hearts together. One of the basic results of our weekly corporate worship should be the growing bond of love and unity that develops between believers. This bond of fellowship should result in God's family members learning to care, honor, and serve one another in love. We should treat others with the same tenderness and understanding that we have experienced from God Himself. This determination to live in a love relationship with fellow believers is infinitely more

important than the issues or differences that may separate us.

"Christian unity does not mean that we must eliminate all diversities. We should be able to differ with each other while maintaining love, respect, and a warm, unified spirit. When our differences get out of hand and hard feelings develop, however, the communion service should always be a reminder that we must reconcile our differences and once more restore a spirit of unity within the body of Christ. The bread and cup of the Lord's Supper should remind us of this truth each time we participate together (I Cor. 11:17-34)."

("Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions," Kenneth W. Osbeck, Kregel Publications, 2002, p. 63.)

*Let us break bread together on our knees;
let us break bread together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising son,
O Lord have mercy on me.*

*Let us drink wine together on our knees;
let us drink wine together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising son,
O Lord have mercy on me.*

*Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising son,
O Lord have mercy on me.*

Days for Girls (DfG)

Pittsburgh South PA Days for Girls (DfG)

More than 500 million people worldwide do not have what they need to manage their periods. DfG is an organization that sends reusable menstrual kits all over the world to help those in need. Our chapter is focusing on sewing the drawstring bags that are used to hold all of the supplies in the kit.

When?

Wednesdays

10 am – 2 pm

Where?

Sunset Hills United
Presbyterian Church

Wilson Hall

Enter through the side door of the
large parking lot.

900 Country Club Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Donations Needed:

- Polyester Thread
- -5/8 Grosgrain Ribbon
- Sewing Scissors
- Seam Rippers
- Sewing Lights
- Rotary Cutters
- Straight Pins

Monetary donations also accepted.

DAYS FOR
GIRLS

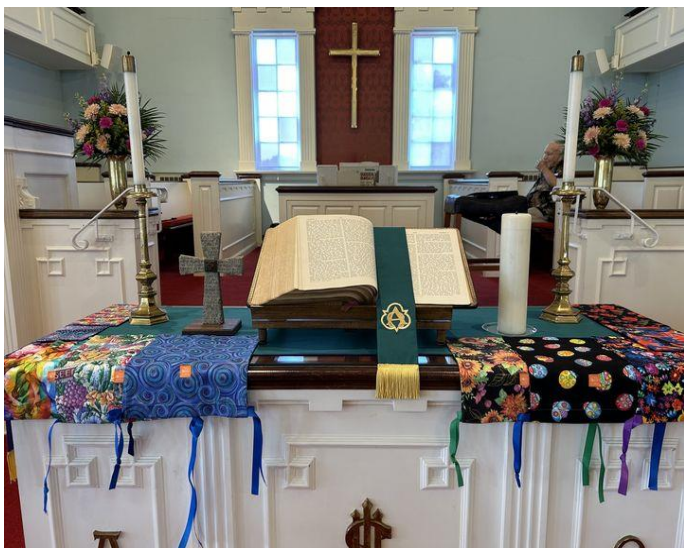
On Sunday, September 15th, Pastor Laura said a prayer of dedication for the bags that the PA South Chapter of Days for Girls have been working on since they opened shop right here at Sunset Hills Church.

The bags were displayed during the worship service, but only a small sample could be shared. There was not enough room for the 370 other bags on the communion table.



After the worship service Beth Romig and Pastor Laura drove to the new PA Collection Point located on the campus of George Junior Republic to deliver the bags to be used for feminine hygiene kits.

While there, they were able to view the facility and spend some time learning about how the kits all come together. The PA South Chapter may be a smaller team than most, but they are making a huge impact! Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication.



Reformation Sunday

The Blessing of the Kirken



October 27th

During Worship



In celebration of our Presbyterian Heritage, we will celebrate Reformation Sunday with the Blessing of the Kirken (Church). Each household in the congregation will receive a special blessing during the worship service which will include bagpipe music and our favorite Celtic hymns.

Potluck Lunch

After worship, we will have a luncheon in Findley Hall. If your last name starts with A-I please bring a main dish, J-Q a side, & R-Z a dessert.

Don't Forget to Wear Plaid!

Mission Opportunities

Are you looking for an easy and fun way to help with Mission? How about a short FIELD TRIP? SHUP has been invited to tour and volunteer at GLOBAL Links in Green Tree on Saturday, October 5, from 10 am - Noon. All volunteers must wear closed-

GLOBAL LINKS
Sharing Surplus. Saving Lives.

toe shoes and clothing you don't mind getting dusty. All volunteering takes place at Global Links headquarters in Green Tree, 700 Trumbull Drive 15205. Plenty of parking is available in the lot before the building and along the street, but please plan to meet at the church at 9:00 AM to carpool and share a donut and coffee with fellow volunteers. A sign-up sheet is in the hall by the Findley Hall doors or you can sign up on this link, [Group Volunteering Inquiry Form – Global Links](#).

MISSION
EVENT

BLANKETS FOR TEENS & CHILDREN

October 20th
After Worship
Findley Hall

THE MISSION COMMISSION WILL BE HOLDING A BLANKET-MAKING SUNDAY AGAIN THIS YEAR. THIS BLANKET DRIVE IS ORGANIZED EACH YEAR BY ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CHURCH & ST. RAPHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH IN CARNEGIE. (THE LAST TWO YEARS WE'VE JOINED THEIR EFFORT TO MAKE BLANKETS THAT WERE FIRST SENT TO THE UKRAINE AND THEN TO HOMELESS SHELTERS.) OUR BLANKET-MAKING SUNDAY THIS YEAR WILL BE ON OCT. 20.

FOLLOWING WORSHIP, WE'LL MEET IN FINDLEY HALL TO WORK ON THESE EASY-TO-MAKE, NON-SEWING BLANKETS (CUTTING STRIPS AND TYING KNOTS). MANY HANDS WILL MAKE THE WORK GO QUICKLY! IF YOU HAVE SOME GOOD FABRIC SCISSORS, PLEASE BRING THEM ALONG (WITH YOUR NAME CLEARLY MARKED ON THEM.) THIS YEAR, ALL BLANKETS WILL BE DONATED TO THE BRADLEY CENTER AND THE CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE.

WE HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US FOR THIS
IMPORTANT MISSION



Trick-or-Treat Party



October Information

Adult Sunday School
9:00 am – Cort Room

The class will continue to meet on Sunday mornings. On October 6th, the class will begin a study on the *History of Christianity: From the Disciples to the Dawn of the Reformation* with instructor Luke Timothy Johnson.

Fellowship Hour
First Sunday of the Month

We will continue to hold fellowship after the worship service on the first Sunday of every month. If you would like to host one Sunday, please sign up on the sheet outside of Findley Hall.

Sunday Worship
10:15 am

If you are not able to join us in person, a video of the service will be posted to our YouTube channel on the Monday after the service: [Sunset Hills Church - YouTube](#). You can get a copy of the bulletin by clicking on the link on the homepage of our website www.shupchurch.org.

Findley Hall Bible Study
Monday – 1:00 pm

The Findley Hall Bible study will meet every Monday in October.

If you would like to learn more about this study, please contact Jody Colby at jody.colby@verizon.net.

Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study
Tuesday – 1:00 pm – Cort Room

The class will be meeting every Tuesday in October. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Carole McCullough at (412)343-5758.

Yoga
Tuesday – 5:30 pm - Crystal Hall

Instructors from BreaheIn2It Yoga will have class every Tuesday in October.

To sign up or learn more, please visit: [Online Stress Management & Anxiety Relief Programs \(breathein2it.com\)](#).

Campanile Bells Rehearsal
Tuesday - 6:30 pm

Bells will have practice every Tuesday evening.

Peanuts Square Dancing Club
Tuesday - 7:00 pm

The Peanuts Square Dancing club will meet in Crystal Hall. Everyone is welcome, no partner or previous experience is needed. There is a cost of \$5/class.

Chancel Choir Practice
Tuesday - 7:30 pm

The Chancel Choir will have practice every Tuesday in October.


Days for Girls
Wednesday – 10:00 am

Days for Girls will meet in Wilson Hall every Wednesday in October.

Tai Chi
Wednesday – 6:30 pm

Gurney Bolster, certified Tai Chi instructor, will hold classes every Wednesday in October.

If you are interested in learning more about these classes, please contact Gurney at: gurneybolster@gmail.com.



**sunday,
november 3rd**

**FLU / COVID 19 / PNEUMONIA
VACCINE SHOTS AVAILABLE**

AFTER WORSHIP-FINDLEY HALL

October Birthdays

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Jonathan Fako | 26 Mary Abbott |
| 5 Marla Bruschi | 28 Randy Farabaugh |
| 11 Susan Pohek | Ali Vernacchio |
| 14 Tori Vernacchio | 29 Julianna Ellis |
| 18 Kara Yates | Bill Weidensall |
| 21 Pat Patterson | 31 Beverly Knasko |
| 23 Alecia Ney | Ryan Pohek |

Prayer List

Dee Borman



Prayer Circle

We ask that every week you take a moment and add these people to your daily prayers.

<u>Week of:</u>	<u>Praying for:</u>
Oct 6 th	Tiffani Fitzwilliam The Ellis family; John, Angela, Julianna & Jacey
Oct 13 th	The Flaus family; Greg, Laura & Erin Chris Gardner
Oct 20 th	William & Barb Geary Gus & Sandy Gill
Oct 27 th	Ryan & Andrea Gracey Rev. Dr. Bill & Shelby Gracey

SHIM Food Donations

Most Needed Items

Dried Beans, Lentils, Pasta Sauce in jars, Cereal & Oatmeal, Soup, Condiments, Spices, Adult Diapers, Baby Diapers (size 4-6), Dog & Cat Food, and Personal Care Items.

SHIM Clothing Closet

Accepting donations of clothes (in season), shoes, and linens (no large household items). Located at the Church of Nazarene (5601 Library Road). Drop-off hours: Monday – 10:00 am until 1:00 pm. *If you are not able to deliver your donations during these hours, you can leave them in the closet outside of Findley Hall and a Mission Commission member will deliver them for you.*

Sunset Hills Book Club

October Book of the Month

Cloistered, My Years as a Nun

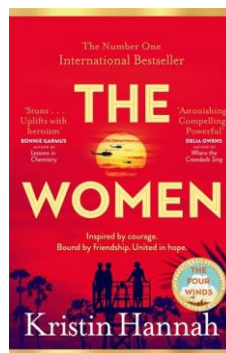
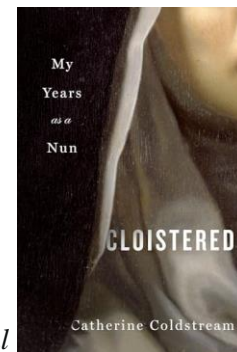
By Catherine Coldstream

October 30th – 7:30 pm

“Cloistered” takes the reader deep into the hidden world of a traditional

Carmelite monastery as it approaches the third Millennium and tells the story of an intense personal journey into and out of an enclosed life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Finding an apparently perfect world at Akenside Priory, in Northumberland, Catherine trusts herself to a group of twenty silent women, believing she is trusting herself to God. As the beauty and mystery of an ancient way of life enfold her, she surrenders herself wholly to its power, quite unaware of the complexity and dangers that lie ahead.

An exploration of the limits of trust, Cloistered shows us how far youthful idealism can take us along the road of self-surrender, and of how much harm is done when institutional flaws go unacknowledged. Catherine’s honest account of her time in the monastery – and her dramatic flight from it – is both a love song to a lost community and an exploration of what is most compelling, yet most potentially destructive when closed human groups become laws unto themselves. (Amazon Book Description)



November 2024

The Women

by Kristin Hannah

Meeting on November 20th.

December 2024

The Thing with Feathers

by Noah Strycker

Meeting on December 18th.

