



# The Linway News

December 2025

Linway **PRESBYTERIAN** CHURCH

*Celebrating 128 Years*  
*June 1, 1897 – June 1, 2025*

## MESSAGE FROM OUR STUDENT PASTOR



Dear Beloved Linway Community,

As we step into December and the season of Advent, the words of Psalm 46 feel especially fitting: **“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”** (Psalm 46:1)

Advent is a season of longing, a season of watching and waiting for God’s promised salvation. Yet it arrives at the busiest, noisiest time of year. Our calendars fill, our to-do lists grow, and our minds race faster than ever. In the midst of all this, Scripture calls us back to a holy stillness: **“Be still, and know that I am God.”** (Psalm 46:10)

These words are not spoken into a peaceful setting. Psalm 46 describes a world where the earth trembles, mountains shake, and nations roar. It’s a world that feels a lot like ours: a world filled with uncertainty, tension, and deep yearning for peace. And into that world, God speaks a word of assurance: I am with you. I am your refuge. I am your strength.

Advent carries the same promise. We don’t prepare for the coming of Christ by pretending the darkness isn’t real, we prepare by remembering that God enters the very places where we feel most unsteady. Into our fears, God brings hope. Into our weariness, God brings rest. Into our chaos, God brings peace.



Twice the psalmist repeats the refrain: **“The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.”** (verses 7 and 11)

This is the heart of Christmas. In **Jesus Christ, God becomes truly with us; He is not distant, not abstract, but present and near.** The Child in the manger is the living sign that God steps into our story with compassion, courage, and redeeming love.

As we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, we are not simply marking time. We are proclaiming that even in the darkest moments, God’s light shines. We are joining generations of believers who have learned to look for God not only in the triumphant moments, but in the quiet, ordinary places where grace shows up.

My prayer for you this month is that you find moments, even if they are small, to pause and breathe in this truth. Light your Advent candle. Sit with a favorite Scripture. Whisper a prayer. Let God’s stillness anchor you.

May you know during this holy season that **God is in our midst and will not be moved** (Psalm 46:5). May Christ’s peace surround you and steady you. And may the Spirit fill you with hope as we prepare once more to welcome Emmanuel, God with us.

**Blessings of hope, peace, joy, and love to you this Advent and Christmas.**

Grace and Peace in the Lord Jesus Christ,  
Jakob J. Harmon, Student Pastor

### Holiday Service Times

Christmas Eve, Wed, Dec. 24:

**6:30pm Christmas Eve Communion  
& Candlelight Service**

Sun., Dec. 28

**One Morning Service at 10:00 a.m.**

Sun., Jan. 4

**One Morning Service at 10:00 a.m.**

The entire Christmas Eve Service will be recorded and posted to the church website and to the Linway Church Facebook Page.

### Congregational Meeting

**Sunday, December 21 at 11:30**

Please join us for a Congregational Meeting in the Sanctuary on Dec. 21 at 11:30 a.m. The purpose of the meeting is to present and approve the names of those who have been nominated for the Session and Board of Deacons for the new term of church officers beginning January 2026.

### You're Invited: Christmas Luncheon

**Sun, Dec. 14 at Noon** Everyone is invited for a time of holiday fun and fellowship! Bring your favorite covered-dish to share. After lunch, we'll sing some carols and the kids will share their Christmas Program. Hope you can come for this special time with your church family!

**The Kids' Christmas Program** on Dec. 14 will have both reading & non-reading parts for all ages. Parents/guardians, please encourage your child/youth to meet downstairs in the Social Hall on the 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 for practice during the service.

*May the God of hope fill you  
with all joy and peace as you  
trust in him, so that you may  
overflow with hope by the  
power of the Holy Spirit.*

*~Romans 15: 13*



## The Session

**Next Session Meeting:** Dec. 16 at 7:00 pm

### Stewardship & Finance Committee

#### **Per Capita & 2025 Giving Reminder**

If you have not yet done so, the Stewardship & Finance Committee asks that you please remember to pay your 2025 Per Capita of \$38.11 by December 31. Also, any donations for 2025 must be received by the church by December 31.

**Special Offerings for 2025:** For those who did not receive a box of weekly giving envelopes at the beginning of the year, these are the remaining special offerings for 2025:

Dec. 14 Christmas Offering

Dec. 21 Christmas Joy Offering

### Missions

#### **Thanksgiving Dinner Giveaway**



The week before Thanksgiving, the Allegheny County Sheriff's Office in conjunction with the North Versailles Police Department & Walmart gave Thanksgiving dinner to more than 200 families. Linway was proud to open our doors to serve as the distribution location. Families were nominated by area social service agencies to pick-up the ingredients for a full turkey dinner to then prepare in their own homes. What a blessing to help our community this way!



### **Rise Against Hunger**



Eighteen individuals from Linway participated in the Rise Against Hunger event at St. John's Church on Nov. 15th. Ten thousand meals were packed in less than 2 hours by nearly 90 volunteers from 7 churches. These simple meals of rice, beans & dried vegetables will nourish and make a life-saving difference for communities in need around the world.

### **MA's Pantry Yard Sign**

You may have noticed a new sign on Linway's front lawn. MA' Pantry is situated in a somewhat out of the way location in East McKeesport. With the help of the Pittsburgh Foundation, MA's is in the process of advertising its services with:

- door hangers on the individual doorknobs of the residents of 13 low-income apartment buildings in E. McKeesport and N. Versailles
- two colorful post card mailers to every household in E.McKeesport & N. Versailles;
- new signs in front of our church & St. John's Church
- a one-hour radio broadcast & other efforts.

### **MA's Pantry Giving Tree**

Sun, Dec. 14 is the last day to help a local family this Christmas thru the Giving Tree. Our church along with other churches in the community will be participating.



Here's how it works:

1. Take a paper ornament from our tree in our Narthex.
2. Purchase a \$25 Giant Eagle Gift Card.
3. Place your gift card inside the envelope attached to the paper ornament.
4. Place the envelope & ornament in our Offering by Sun, Dec. 14. The gift cards will then be taken to MA's for distribution.

Also, monetary donations marked "MA's Pantry" that are placed in the offering or mailed to the church by Dec. 14 will be combined to purchase gift cards for MA's recipients.

The holidays ahead will be especially difficult. Our members have been very generous. Keep MA's in your prayers and on your list of organizations to help.

### **MA's Food Distribution Dates**

Dec. 20, Jan. 3, Jan. 17

For residents of North Versailles and East McKeesport. Phone: 412-824-0277 for more info. Located at 1000 Broadway St., East McKeesport.

---

### **Member Care & Outreach Committee**

#### **Coffee Connection Help Needed**

Thank you to everyone who continues to host or provide snacks for Coffee Connection every Sunday! Please help keep this weekly time of fellowship going. There is a sign-up sheet on the coffee table if you'd be willing to help on a Sunday. Select your date and what you're willing to help with. If you have questions, please see Lila Sedlak (412-672-6820) or Amy Gida (412607-8430).



**Property Committee**  
**Chancel Floor Beautification**



The Property Committee is pleased to share that the carpeting on the Chancel floor and steps was removed. The hardwood floor that was underneath has been refinished, resulting in a beautiful new look for the Chancel. Railings will soon be installed on the Chancel steps. Thank you to those who helped with this project.

**Snow Removal Donations Requested**

If you are willing to help with this expense, please use one of the pew envelopes or mail your donation to the church and designate it for "Snow Removal". Thank you so much for helping us keep the church's parking lots plowed and safe.

**Fundraising Committee**  
**Fall Festival**

Thank you to everyone that contributed in any way to our Fall Festival. It was a great time to make new friends, catch up with old friends, enjoy delicious food, and even pick up some Christmas presents. We could not have held it without all the hard work of so many volunteers in so many different ways.

**Gift Cards**

Giant Eagle, Eat n'Park, and Dunkin Donuts Gift Cards in various amounts are always available for purchase after the Sunday worship services or by contacting the church office. The church receives a percent of each gift card that is purchased.

**Sarris Candy**

Sarris Candy is available after the worship service or by contacting the church office. \$2 for Candy Bars (flavors: Milk Chocolate, Almond, Peanut Butter, or Crisp Rice) and \$3 for 2 Choco-covered Pretzel Rods.

**Deacons**



The Deacons would like to thank everyone that helped to decorate the church for Christmas!

The Deacons will be meeting on Dec. 14 to prepare holiday cheer stockings following the Christmas luncheon.

**Christian Education Committee**

**Kid's Club Dec. 17 at 6:00 p.m.**

There is a Bible lesson, game, craft, music, and snack. Kid's Club is open to children age 5 through 6th grade, regardless of their church affiliation or school district. Feel free to share information about our program with other families. Please contact the church office for registration forms or if you have questions.

**Christmas Caroling: Sun, Dec. 28 at 5:00**



Everyone is invited to share the joy of Christmas! You'll easily know the carols! Meet at the East Allegheny High School parking lot. Park on the top side by the houses & we'll carpool from there. Bring a friend!

## Operation Christmas Child: 34 Shoe Boxes!



Thank you to everyone who participated in Operation Christmas Child. We were able to send 34 boxes from Linway, sharing the love of the Lord with children around the world! Please pray that each one of our shoeboxes from Linway makes a difference in a child's life and helps them to develop a relationship with our Lord.

### Bible Study

Our Advent Bible Study, *The Case for Christmas*, wrapped up on December 10. The group enjoyed learning about and discussing historical, factual evidence confirming what we believe: the baby born in Bethlehem was the Messiah. Watch the bulletin and newsletter for information on when the next Bible Study will be offered.

### **Music Ministry**



Chancel Choir: practices on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. New choir members are always welcome to sing joyfully to the Lord.



Linway's Rowley Handbell Choir: will be playing for the Christmas Eve Service. Practice is on Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. Previous experience is not needed. You are welcome to come and ring.

## **Linway Preschool**

This month the students are learning about the meaning of Christmas. They are so excited seeing our Sanctuary's big Christmas tree with the manger and baby Jesus underneath. For their art projects, the children are making Christmas tree ornaments to give to their families.

## **Women's Breakfast**

The first Monday of the month, the women of Linway get together for breakfast at 10:00 a.m. at North Versailles Eat 'N Park. Any woman from the church is welcome. The next breakfast date will be on Jan. 5.

## **Men's Breakfast**

The men are also getting together for breakfast at 9:00 a.m. at North Versailles Eat 'N Park. All men are invited. The next breakfast date will be December 31.

## **Craft Ladies**

The Craft Ladies are not meeting during the month of December. They will next meet after the holidays on Tues, Jan 6 at 12:30.

## **Meals on Wheels**

The East Allegheny Meals on Wheels operates out of the Linway kitchen 5 days a week to provide meals for their clients. Volunteers are always welcome. Information on Meals on Wheels is available by calling: 412-327-6908.



## Need for Prayer



**Please remember the following in our prayers:**

Helen Alexander, David A, Annie, Kathy B, Patty B, Jordan & Chelsea B, Don & Donnie Baker, Chris, Jeannette Briggs, Dave Brown, Connie, Jim C, Cheryl D, Nathan E, Frank Fawcett, Betty Frommell, Michelle F, Bev & Barry Harcum, Clare & Sandy Hillgartner, Frank Kordalski Sr, Bill Knight, Harold L, Cindie M, Cindy & Ken McCall, Rick Morgan, Peg M, Andrew N, Howard N, Mark Pascarella, Matt R., Renee R, Susan S, Shawn, Laura Shawley, Bill Szmuc, Bruce S, Pat V, Kevin W, Scott W, Wanda, Linda Wetzler

## Our Sympathy

Our sympathy is extended to Mark & AJ Pascarella & their family. Carol Pascarella, a long-time member of Linway, went home to be with our Lord on Tues, Nov. 25. The funeral service was held Sat, Nov. 29 at Linway.

## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Samantha Stewart who graduated on Dec. 13 from Pennsylvania Western University Clarion Campus with a Master's Degree in Speech Language Pathology.

## Thank You for Well Wishes

Thank you to everyone for visits, texts, phone calls, flowers, cards, & words of encouragement throughout Dave's recent surgery and recovery. Most importantly, your prayers throughout this journey are appreciated. What a difference prayers make!  
-Dave & Kim Brown

## Happy Anniversary!

**Happy December Anniversary to:**



Gladys & Michael Festa  
Leo & Christina Sullivan  
Frank & Wendie Kordalski

## Happy Birthday!

**Happy December Birthday to:**

Aimee Mitchell      Glen Young  
Rayanne Pyles      Bill Szmuc

**Happy January Birthday to:**

Ariana Trout	Alyssa Bernhardt
Allie Mitchell	Ellie Mitchell
Kathy Bahr	Jan Krisantz
Ava Mitchell	Glenn Marrow
Lori Frye	Wayne Gida
Wendie Kordalski	



## Online Giving

**Online Giving Through Tithe.ly**

Tithe.ly is a secure way to give to Linway Church through credit cards or your bank account from anywhere at any time.

There are two ways to give via Tithe.ly:

- Website: <https://tithe.ly/give>
- App: Downloaded to your phone (<https://get.tithe.ly/download-tithely-app>) from either the Apple App Store or Google Play. Note: When searching for Tithe.ly, select the Finance App.

Once on either the website or the app, the registration process is very quick and secure. To find Linway, click on Search, type Linway and select Linway United Presbyterian Church. If you have any additional questions, please contact Christine Stewart, our Financial Secretary, at [financial@linwaychurch.org](mailto:financial@linwaychurch.org).



## The Name of Jesus

By Linway Member Frank Fawcett

I hear the sound of hope and joy,  
The cry of a precious baby boy.  
A precious stone, a precious gem,  
Was laid in little Bethlehem.  
He was rejected by his own,  
But then became the cornerstone.  
And in the darkness of the night,  
He brought to Bethlehem a light.  
A light to shine and show the way,  
And give us hope for each new day.

The Light of the World, The King of Kings,  
The one of whom the angels sing.  
The subject of the Holy Scroll,  
We wait for Him to call the roll.  
The Living Hope, The Living Word,  
The sweetest name I've ever heard.  
The name of Jesus, God's own son,  
Of Israel, the Holy One.  
With all my heart I'll always say,  
"The name of Jesus" when I pray.

*Luke 1:31, Philip 2:9-11, John 15:15*



**Due to the holidays, the Church Office  
will be closed:**

**Dec. 24-26 and Jan. 1**

If you should need something, please leave  
a message on the answering machine,  
and we will return your call.



**The next edition of this  
Newsletter will be the  
January/February  
Edition and will be  
available the end of  
January.**

### **The Linway News**

Linway United Presbyterian Church  
600 Lincoln Highway  
North Versailles, Pa 15137  
(412) 824-3555  
[www.LinwayChurch.org](http://www.LinwayChurch.org)

### **Church Office Hours:**

Mon-Thurs 9:00-3:00; Fri 9:00- Noon

Please use our East Entrance to  
visit the office during the week.

### **Sunday Morning Worship:**

\*9:15 a.m.-Contemporary Service

\*10:30 a.m. Traditional Service

**\*Please see Page 2 for  
altered service times for the holidays.**

### **Church Staff:**

**Pastor Jakob Harmon**, Student Pastor

Email: [Pastor.Harmon@Linwaychurch.org](mailto:Pastor.Harmon@Linwaychurch.org)

**Church Office Manager:** Leanne Cornell

Email: [contact@linwaychurch.org](mailto:contact@linwaychurch.org)

**Financial Secretary:** Christine Stewart

Email: [financial@linwaychurch.org](mailto:financial@linwaychurch.org)

**Organist/Choir Director:** George Hawkins

**Deadline** for newsletter information is the  
Sunday before the last Sunday of the  
month.

© License CCLI#:1761256

## **'Twas the Night Before Christmas: A Visit from Christ**

*Written by Angie Mosteller in her 2008 book:*

*Christmas: Celebrating the Christian History of American Symbols, Songs and Stories*

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all  
through the earth,  
Every creature was stirring, awaiting a birth.  
The time for Messiah was certainly near,  
The prophets foretold it; the Bible was clear.  
From the book of beginnings, the very first sin,  
God's word made it clear how His grace  
entered in.  
Born of a virgin, He'd come as a man.  
The Creator among us, the time was at hand.  
The stars were arranged to show marvelous  
things,  
Setting Wise Men to journey and find the true  
King.  
Shepherds in Bethlehem gazed on the sky,  
Longing to see him, their Lord the Most High.  
How could they know that the very next night  
An angel of God would speak words of delight?  
How the Savior was born, it was news of great  
joy.  
In a cloth and a manger they'd find the dear  
boy.  
And a heavenly host would soon join to sing  
Of the glory of God and of wonderful things.  
He entered creation, set position aside  
To show us how deeply his love did abide.  
Sin sent us away from our almighty Lord.  
He became one of us that we might be  
restored.  
He's the Prince of our Peace; He's the one who  
makes whole.  
He is Wisdom Incarnate, a Shepherd of Souls.  
He's the Author of Life; He's the Ruler of All.  
He can offer salvation, on His name we call.  
The shepherds and Wise Men would bow to  
adore  
Holy God among men, our greatest reward.

All glory and honor is due to this King.  
Let all join in worship; let every tongue sing.  
Jesus is Lord, all creation proclaims.  
He's the first and last, He is always the same.  
History turned on the first Christmas day,  
When God became man in a humble display.  
As we think of the manger in which He was  
laid,  
Let our hearts welcome Him to the world He  
made!



**The Birth of Jesus**  
depicted in one of  
Linway's beautiful windows