



I face a dilemma as I write. First of all, I have written and spoken on this topic quite a few times. Second, I plan to preach on it at least once two weeks from now. I want the material to be fresh and at the same time it needs to be repeated until we all feel it to be a part of ourselves. After all, if our faith is not internalized so that we live it, it is no faith at all.

My rescue came from a little book by Michael B. Berger. Its title is, The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking. In it he states, “... don’t face complex issues head on; first understand simple ideas deeply.” Now we can explore one simple idea – deeply.

We are heading into Lent, the pre Easter season. Easter is the time when we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his ascension. Easter time continues through Pentecost. Easter itself, the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus make no sense unless we understand the reason for the death/resurrection/ascension of Jesus.

So this is what I want to do. I want to probe a little further into the basic cause for Jesus’ self-sacrificing life. This will take us back into the Old Testament, into the first few pages of Genesis, to the old story of a talking snake. We will push a little deeper than at other times and come a little closer to the great divide between God and us. This divide after all, is why Jesus came to the cross for us. It is why Easter exists. It had to be this way for we cannot cross the chasm ourselves, however hard we try.

The story begins in Genesis chapter 1 and continues

through chapter 3. For review, it goes like this. God says that the two humans Adam and Eve may eat of every tree of the garden but one; note, this is every tree, except one, a very generous gift. We know the rest of the story. A very cunning serpent tricks, or persuades, or lures Adam and Eve into eating from the one tree prohibited. God is angry, Adam and Eve lose their favored status and God evicts them from the garden in which He has placed them. We know this story, or do we?

“Theologian Sinclair Ferguson analyzes the dialogue between the serpent and the first human beings” in this story. (Keller, Preaching, p. 52) Ferguson points out several things that a casual reader might miss. First of all God gives no reason why the two humans are not to eat from the one tree. We might think then that God expects Adam and Eve to obey out of love or obedience or trust or at least respect. This implies “a particular attitude and relationship to God” let us say, one of faith or trust. It is this relationship that the snake attacks.

The serpent’s first line of attack is, “Did God actually say ...” What is important here for this argument, is not what God said but that the serpent attacks God’s reliability. He produces doubt in the human mind. Then the snake drives home his point. Disobeying God will not cause death, as promised, or even be harmful. NO! Absolutely not! The serpent claims that disobeying God will bring freedom. The implication here is that obeying God brings one misery and disobedience leads to, well, let’s just say fun.

Humanity bought the lie and we have lived that way ever since. “The lie was an assault on God’s generosity and his integrity.” In other words, God cannot really be trusted. If we believe that what we do is right and God is wrong, and unfortunately most of us do, just look at the moral landscape of the world these days, then we quite simply reject God.

The result is this:

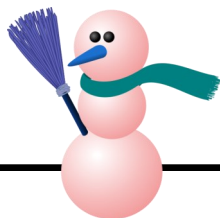
This lie has “entered the bloodstream of the human race” as the default heart condition, “deep in the human psyche.” Now at the bottom of our souls, whether we follow God’s laws or not – human beings do not trust God’s will toward us. (Keller, p. 53)

And so you see, we need Jesus to show us faith, the total following of God’s will, whether it makes sense or not.

Pastor Pete

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THE TRANSFIGURATION

Sunday,
February 7, 2016

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY THE SUNDAY IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO ASH WEDNESDAY IS AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO CELEBRATE THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD, BECAUSE THIS EVENT MARKED A TRANSITION IN JESUS' MINISTRY IN WHICH HE "SET HIS FACE TO GO TO JERUSALEM" (LUKE 9:51), WHERE HE WOULD DIE. IN JESUS' TRANSFIGURATION, WE ARE ASSURED THAT JESUS IS THE HOPE OF THE AGES. JESUS IS THE ONE WHO FULFILLED THE LAW GIVEN THROUGH MOSES, THE ONE DREAMED OF BY THE PROPHETS, OF WHOM ELIJAH IS THE GREATEST.

In celebrating this event, we rejoice in the divine majesty of Christ, whose glory shone even when confronted with the cross. It is given us for our journey through Lent toward the agony of the cross and the victory of the empty tomb. We celebrate this mystery in order that our faith may be renewed. We are transformed into the new being in Christ as we join Christ in his death and resurrection in Lent and Easter. An excerpt from the [Companion to the Book of Common Worship](#) (Geneva Press, 2003, 148-149)



Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession and contrition. Acknowledging that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, we stand in solidarity as fellow creatures before our Creator, acutely aware of our mortality. In the face of our transience, we pledge ourselves anew to live unto God's Word in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word that remains forever.

**The Poke Run Church community will mark this day with a Worship Service.
Wednesday, February 10th, 7:30pm— Plan on attending.**



The season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call to Ninevah to repent and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness.

Information provided here is from the website of:



Preparing for Easter:

**Palm Sunday, March 20th
Good Friday, March 25th**

Maundy Thursday, March 24th

Resurrection of the Lord— Easter Sunday, March 27th!

Stories of Redstone

Christ at work in our midst

2016 Presbytery Leadership

Moderator and Vice-Moderator

Rev. Pete Goetschius



Pete grew up the son of a PC(USA) minister and grandson of an Independent Baptist pastor. His faith in Jesus Christ grew while seeing differences. While serving in Viet Nam, the reality of God's grace in his life was confirmed. Serving as TE of Poke Run Church, Pete believes that our faith is not something private or reduced to a set of beliefs, but a life that shows the truth of Christ and brings healing to those who are hurting.

As a bi-vocational pastor ministering at Reunion Presbyterian Church, **Sue** loves their mission to reach out to all God's people. Sue is also a writer/blogger for *Presbyterians Today*, a retreat leader and an occasional curriculum writer for The Thoughtful Christian. Sue challenges all of us to ask: *how can we share Jesus Christ in a world that no longer trusts the church and other institutions?* She suggests that it may be not so much in changing our beliefs, but rather how we communicate with them in a smartphone world.

Rev. Sue Washburn



On Saturday, January 16th, Poke Run's Pastor Pete was installed as the Moderator for Redstone Presbytery. Poke Run friend, Sue Washburn was installed as Vice-Moderator.

"The presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love and witness." (PCUSA Book of Order.)

The moderator acts as chair of presbytery meetings. The moderator will conduct worship and oversee ordinations and installations of ministers and other ordinances which are seen as acts of the presbytery.

Please keep Pastor Pete in your prayers as he fulfills this position in 2016. As he said that day, "These are indeed extraordinary times that call upon all of us to be extra-ordinary." (Thank you to Bob Scott and Connie Cauvel for providing the photos used on this page.)

Communicate the Word...Carry on the Work...Change the World
Together!



Thank you to our January Lectors: Linda Chicka, Bob Scott, Bob Fitzgerald, Walt Lange and Becky Lange

Thank you to our January Greeters:

Brian & Nancy Dombroske, Tom & Nancy Kimble, Eva & Andy Bantroch, Irma McDivitt, Ruth O'Connor, Heidi Hileman and Walt Lange

*Thank
You*

A special Thank You to Murrysville Giant Eagle for contributing to the meal provided at the Veteran's Healing Service.

Thank you to everyone who attended or served at the Healing Service for Veterans.

Thank you from Bob Bierer—he really appreciated all the cards and notes that he received commemorating his 94th Birthday!

"Thank you to all who prayed, sent cards, flowers, condolences, visited the funeral home, or helped our family in any way during the loss of our family matriarch, Thelma McCutcheon. Special thanks to all who prepared, sent food, set-up, worked and tore down after the funeral dinner. We genuinely appreciate all you did for us during a difficult time. We are truly blessed to have such a great church family supporting us. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.-The family of Thelma McCutcheon"

For our prayers:

Ed Bahney, Renee Bates, Renee Beck, Bill Bert, Bob Bierer, Bryan Billeck, Donna Blaser, Lil Bowman, Max Brooks, Ralph Brown, Carolyn Buckley, Anna Mae Chicka, Irene Clark, Jeffrey Clark, Lyndsey Coulter, Elvira, Lee & Linda Gardener, Helen Grayem, Allison Grundy, Caleb Hall, Leonard Hartman, Janine Hayle, Rachel Hill, Joyce Hodges, Tiffany Jensen, Leland & Berenice Jones, Marjorie Kaiser, Pat Lengauer, Clifford & Karen Lightner, Norm Linhart, Merle Lowman, Samantha McCutcheon, Irma McDivitt, Conrad McQuaide, Amy McQuaide, JoAnn Miller, June Moorhead, Steve Morcheid, Sandy Nemetz, Thad Overly, Wanda Petrilla, James & Winifred Powers, Rafael Rincon, Steve Roman, Ed & Betty Schmidt, Glen Schutlz, Lena Snedecor, Brenda Smith, Callie Spaulding, Terry Wiester, Peter Yurtin, Marnee Gormley, JD Strait, Sarah Brank, those gripped by addictions, and those who serve in the military.



Please keep the family of Poke Run member Thelma McCutcheon in your prayers. Thelma passed away on January 7th.

It is a privilege to lift up those we care about in continued prayer and Poke Run Church rejoices that many of those included on our "Prayer List" are healing and strengthening. If you placed names on our "Prayer List," please contact the office to update us.

Occasionally names are removed from the prayer list when the office has not been updated, if you see one removed that should remain, please contact the office.

**From the Poke Run Presbyterian Church Session Minutes December 8, 2015
Combined Meeting of the Boards**

The annual meeting of the combined boards and Session met in the Sunday School Rooms @ 7:00 PM. We shared light refreshments prepared by Cindy McQuaide, Linda Moorhead, Sandy Chappell and Linda Chicka. A quorum was present and, Rev. Peter Goetschius, Moderator, opened the meeting with prayer and devotions.

Elders present: Rev. Peter Goetschius - Moderator, Connie Cauvel - Clerk, Chad McCutcheon – Assist. Clerk, Sandy Chappell, Ron Hileman, Bob Thompson, Linda Chicka, Meri Slaughaupt, 2016 youth rep. Jeff Wilkinson,

Elders excused: Tim Martin, Cindy McQuaide, Connor Martin

Decans Present: Jan Fitzgerald, Sheree Wagner, Ruth O'Connor. Logan Hileman, Mario Tagliati, Bev Tagliati, Nancy Kimble, Nikki McQuaide

Trustee Present: Dave Wilkinson, Walt Lange, Bob Wilson, Andy Bantroch, Rick Slaughaupt, Jim Moorhead, Rick Slaughaupt,

Staff: Amy Wilkinson

MSC: To approve the Session Minutes of November 10, 2015

MSC: To accept the Deacon Minutes of November 2, 2015

MSC: To accept the Trustee Minutes of November 19, 2015

Correspondence: Thank you message from Facebook, and copy of thank you note from office to Washington Township Fire Company

Treasurer's Report – Amy Wilkinson

MSC: to accept Treasurer Report

Amy reported that each month since September we have continued to close the deficit in our finances

Committee Reports:

Christian Ed – Sandy Chappell -Linda Chicka and Bob Wilson went to see Attorney Wes Long to review our Clearance Policy procedures. He recommends that we require the FBI finger print clearance, because he feels that the Affidavit is not enough. Pete recommends that we always have 2 people in the room during Sunday School & Bible School, so that no one is ever alone with our children.

Mission and Stewardship: Linda Chicka & Meri Slaughaupt - Food Bank Dates for 2016 : Feb. 20, April 23, August 20. We continue to help a Poke Run friend get settled in her new place and also with medical appointments. And Linda reports that she is eternally grateful. Grace Presbyterian Church is planning to accompany us on our Mission Trip in June.

Congregational Life – Connie Cauvel -Prepared and served refreshments after the Healing Service for Doubters and Unbelievers, and will also serve food after our Healing Service for Veterans in January

New Business:

Board Reports:

Jan Fitzgerald reviewed everything the Deacons have done this year. They are trying to take some things off of their plates so they can focus on “serving.” They hope to create more time to serve the “Church Friends” Better. Deacons are very grateful to receive \$2,000 from the Poke Run Budget so they can spend their time helping people and not fundraising.

Bob Wilson reported from the Trustees They still need people to help learn and run the Sound System.

MSC: To donate \$150 to the Washington Township Fire Company for their help with the Flag Pole.

Pete: constant flow and outpouring of help and support of Poke Run. And who knows what the hidden prayer life is for many in our church.

Amy: looking into a mass text message - you can text the office using

Special thank you and blessings to Bob Thompson and Connor Martin for their service on Session

Close with prayer: Meri Slaughaupt

Adjourn:8:25 PM

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved: January 5, 2016



Connie Cauvel (Clerk of Session)

NOTE - due to inclement weather – the Poke Run Session met on January 28th for the months of January and February, 2016

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN NEWS



Poke Run Presbyterian Women continues to redefine itself—but at the core of everything that is happening is the desire to be inclusive of all the women at Poke Run— extending the mission of Presbyterian Women to include everyone.

The stated “Purpose” of PW is:

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves

To nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study,

To support the mission of the church worldwide,

To work for justice and peace,

To build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom.”

Please extend your prayers and support for this year’s PW officers.

Moderator, Cindy McQuaide, Vice-Moderator, Amy Wilkinson, Secretary, Laurie Martin and Treasurer, Linda Chicka.

And NOW—our first “Gathering!”



a “Fellowship Friendship Brunch” for the Poke Run congregation community– Bring yourself, Bring your family, Bring a friend! - men, women , children– a “smorgasbord of brunch delight!” Make plans NOW to attend.

Saturday, February 13th

Doors open at 10:30am, brunch at 11am.



Circle 2: will be meeting on Thursday, February 18, at 6:30pm. AT THE CHURCH. The hostess will be Ruth O’Connor and the leader will be Laurie Martin. Laurie will be sharing pictures and stories of her recent trip to the Holy Lands; ***Everyone is Welcome.***



COMMUNITY DINNER

A generous donation has evolved into a new type of Community Dinner. **Saturday, March 5, 2016, 4-6pm!**

Pork & Sauerkraut, Mashed potatoes, green beans, applesauce, pie! \$10 – tickets are limited and ON SALE NOW! – (\$5 for kids 10 and under) - contact the office!

Proceeds will benefit the “Poke Run General Building Fund.”

All help is appreciated as we again reach out to our Community , praying that they will find nourishment for body and SOUL!! Please consider volunteering your time and maybe a pie?!?!?!?

The next “Soup for the Soul” will be Wednesday, February 10th.

Ham & Bean – doors open at 11:30am, soup is served at noon. Come and bring a friend, help extend a Christian welcome and presence to those God brings to Poke Run!

Becky Lange is providing desserts this month! Thank you Becky!



Join Mission & Stewardship on Friday, February 5th starting at 6pm—to decorate “Valentine’s Day” pretzels with the kids from Adlephoi House.

The pretzels will be delivered to Poke Run shut-ins.



Poke Run will be volunteering at the Westmoreland County Foodbank on Saturday, February 20th, 8:30am – 11:30am.

Volunteers must be at least 14 years old. If you would like more information, to volunteer, or need transportation – call or text Linda

Chicka at 724-422-3688 or email to lgchicka@gmail.com.



**VIRGINIA
MISSION TRIP 2016
JUNE 19-24TH!**



SUNDAY SCHOOL
Make the Connection

Sunday School at Poke Run Church

Classes meet each Sunday at 10am.

FOR THE KIDS The Children’s Class is an engaging time of song and music, crafts and games, and a Bible message. Appropriate for all school aged children. Spread the word—bring kids—invite kids.

ADULTS We have two adult Sunday School classes. The class meeting in the West Wayside room (on the left at the end of the hall) is using the David C. Cook series titled “Sacred Gifts and Holy Gatherings”. The class meeting in the Session Room (on the right at the end of the hall) is working through a study guide from Max Lucado’s Life Lessons series. “Galatians, Free in Christ”

The Poke Run Board of Trustees is a dedicated group that “keeps things running smoothly” here at the church. They handle many many things; some you can see, some you cannot. Here is just a short list of some of the projects completed in 2015:

- Installed a drain for surface water at the new entrances.
- Replaced an old drain under the road.
- Installed a drain under the road for the roof of the church.
- Black topped the driveway and parking lot!
- Replaced the dehumidifiers in fellowship hall and the kitchen.
- Had lines painted for parking.
- Heater in the Narthex repaired.
- Replaced the dishwasher in the manse.
- Installed ground fault receptacles in the kitchen at the manse.
- Repaired the spotlight for the steeple.
- Replaced flag pole rope with help from Washington Twp VFC.



In the works for this year:

- Removal of tree by manse.
- Repair road in cemetery.
- Move the trash enclosure for easier access.
- Update Poke Run By-laws.
- Recruit and train people to run sound system.
- Manse repairs to include, roof and door replacements and painting.
- Purchase and provide training for church AED system.
- Continue to consolidate and update cemetery information and procedures.

The Trustees are great stewards of your tithes and offerings; it is in great part due to their dedication that Poke Run continues to work “in the black” financially.

Keep the Poke Run Board of Trustees in your prayers, and consider offering help whenever and wherever you are able.

Rick Slaughaupt—President
Barry Kelley
Mike Goetschius
Bill Fazi
Jacob Slaughaupt
Walt Lange

Bob Fitzgerald—Secretary
Al Moorhead
Andy Bantroch
Jim Moorhead
Ron Hileman (Session rep)

AND—support the planned March 5th dinner . The proceeds of this dinner will support the ongoing work of the Poke Run Trustees.

JOIN TRUSTEE
And make a difference

From the Poke Run Office

The annual Poke Run Audit was held. Thank you to all Auditors and Treasurers for providing the information needed and making time to attend the audit. The “Annual Report” is being assembled and will be available by the end of February.

Giving statements were mailed during the last week of January. If you did not receive yours or you have questions regarding the information provided, please call Amy Wilkinson at the Poke Run Office. 724-3257-5563



In preparation for the 2016 Directory, Information Needed
Please notify the church office if you have had any name changes, address changes, a change in your phone number or a change in your email address.

You may call the office at 724-327-5563 or email your information to pokerun@windstream.net. Thank you.

FIRST FRUITS

Poke Run Church has committed \$3,125 to Redstone Presbytery as part of their 2016 First Fruits campaign. Budget & Finance suggests a donation of \$35.00 per person for the year. Please help Poke Run meet this Redstone Presbytery campaign commitment.



Your giving is important and appreciated.

You can find Poke Run Presbyterian Church on Facebook! - featuring the “Daily Verse”

Poke Run’s email address: pokerun@windstream.net

Poke Run web site is www.pokerunchurch.com

If you wish to be added to the Poke Run email list or wish to have your Ranger mailed to you—please contact the office.



New Members Class—

Pastor Pete is putting together a class for anyone interested in joining the Poke Run congregation. If you would like to join or want more information, see Pastor Pete or contact the Church Office. 724-327-5563

New
Member
Class



PHOTOS WANTED!!!!

The Office can use emailed or texted photos from cameras or cell phones. We’d love to include more pics from church functions. The march *Ranger* deadline is February 22nd. Contact the office with your news.



HAPPENING IN OUR PRESBYTERY

Feb 6th—"Souper Bowl of Caring" Delmont Presbyterian 4-6pm

Feb 9th—Pancake DINNER—Congruity Church, New Alexandria 4:30-7pm

Feb 13th—PSC Skates—enjoy free ice skating compliments of Pine Springs Camp.
3:10-5:10pm, Delmont Center Ice, \$1.50 skate rental

Feb 14th—Spaghetti Dinner at Community United Presbyterian in New Alexandria—
noon-2pm, "All you can Eat" \$6

Feb 18th—"Faith and Sustainable Investment" Pittsburgh Theological Seminary 4:30pm

Feb 26-28—Jr. Hi Retreat at Pine Springs Camp



Friendship Dinner—2nd Wednesday of every month, 5-6pm New Kensington United Presbyterian

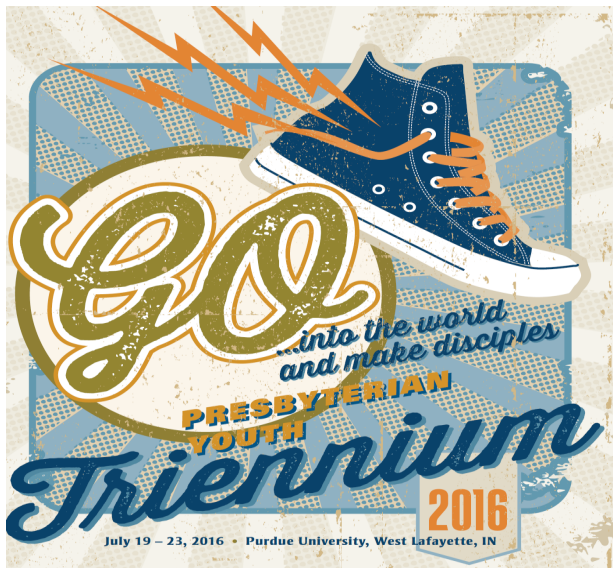
PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIUM—July 19-23, 2016, Purdue University— contact Linda Chicka

PINE SPRINGS CAMP "SUMMER 2016" INFORMATION PAMPHLETS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE. POKE RUN CONTINUES ITS PLEDGE TO SEND ALL CAMPERS TO PINE SPRINGS AT NO COST— CALL THE OFFICE IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

REDSTONE PRESBYTERY OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON FEBRUARY 15TH

HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Feb 6th—Delmont Lion's Club "Pancake Breakfast" - SEE FLYER TO BELOW



Delmont Lions Club



PANCAKE BREAKFAST

All you can eat pancakes, sausage & eggs

**Saturday, February 6th
7:00 AM to 11:00 AM**

Faith United Methodist Church

Adults: \$8.00

Children (under 12): \$4.00

All proceeds benefit local Lions charities.

Tickets available at the door or in advance
from Lions Club members.





February 2016

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

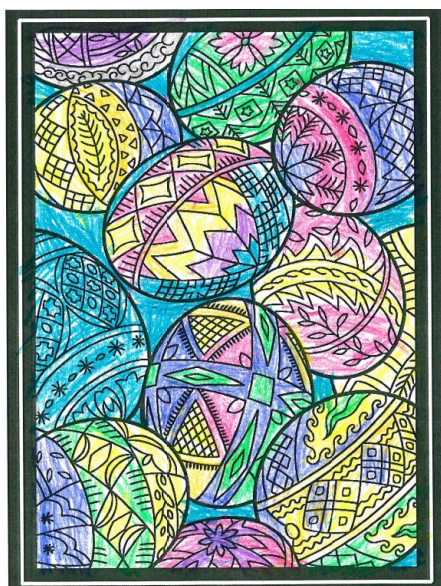
Sat



	1 7pm Deacons	2	3 6:30 pm Bells 7pm Choir 7pm Personnel	4	5 6pm Pretzels with Adelphoi	6
7 8:30-11 Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	8	9 	10 Noon SOUP 7:30pm ASH WEDNESDAY Service	11 6:30 pm Bells 7pm Choir	12	13 1130am Fellowship Brunch
14 8:30-11 Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	15 Office Closed	16	17 6:30 pm Bells 7pm Choir	18 <u>Circle 2</u>	19	20 8:30am Foodbank
21 8:30-11 Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	22	23	24 6:30 pm Bells 7pm Choir	25 7pm Trustees	26	27
28 8:30-11 Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	29 					

Poke Run Presbyterian Church

1091 Poke Run Church Rd.
Apollo, PA 15613



724-327-5563
EMAIL: poke-run@windstream.net
Website: www.pokerunchurch.com



Sunday Worship
8:30am & 11am

