

“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I gave up childish ways.” – so spoke our good friend St. Paul when writing to the church at Corinth.

The life of faith is not static. Faith grows, or withers, as one progresses through one’s life. Our faith changes as we age, as we learn and understand more of the world around us. Our faith is challenged through the events of our life. We do not talk about this much. I am not sure why. Perhaps we are afraid that our faith does not measure up, or that we have lost our faith, or that we will not be understood. So today I want to talk about the growth of faith that comes whether we are aware of it or not. The truth is, everybody has faith in something, even atheists. Everybody believes something; everybody has a religion.

To talk about faith growing and changing I will use the concept of three worlds. You may also think about this as three patterns or ways of thinking, or three ways of believing. I will call these three worlds “safe”, “unsafe”, and “dangerous”.

Let’s talk about the safe world first. This is the world of certainty. For some who call themselves Christians this is the world where the Bible contains the words of God, dictated to certain of his prophets and true and accurate in all that it says. This includes history, science, morality and so on. It is the bumper sticker world of “The Bible says it, I believe it, and that settles it.” It is a way of thinking that demands absolutes. You could easily substitute “science” for “Bible” and maintain the same style of thinking, “Science says it, I believe it, and that settles it. The same goes for what may appear to be more progressive modes of thought, Barth said it, or Derrida said it or Trump said it or ... This way of thinking is very simple and very safe. It gives a person a sense of comfort and a sense of belonging. It is found all over the place, including our academic, perhaps especially in our academic, graduate schools.

But then what happens when, a person discovers that the little town of Ai that Joshua engaged in the conquest of Israel did not exist at the time when Joshua is supposed to have conquered it? Or one finally realizes that the earth is not flat, or that the

Sun does not revolve around the earth, or that Jesus was limited in what he knew, by his own admission? What happens when a person to their dismay finds that Science has its own points of failure and cannot answer all or even most of our important questions? What happens when we finally admit that our heroes have feet of clay? There comes a point when no amount of mental juggling or logic chopping will work. At this point some people give up and walk away. Some people will pout and retreat into an angry petulant box of beliefs. Some will welcome and wonder and try to integrate this new knowledge into the old, or transcend the old.

Some people will step into a broad new beautiful world. This world is the world that I call “unsafe.” It is a world of puzzles and paradox. It is a world where Jesus is fully human and fully God. Sometimes I call this the “World of Initial Bewilderment.” Nothing is as it seems and nothing is as it was. Everything takes on new meaning. To step, jump, or more to the point be thrown into this world leaves one at an initial loss. It takes a while to grow into this world. Never fear, this is exactly where God wants us. So, if you feel a little lost for a time, that is OK. It will pass and you will become comfortable with the puzzles and seeming contradictions and the paradoxes. They will begin to strengthen your faith in new ways. They have great explanatory power that the past certainties never could have had. God will become more real as you will experience God in very personal ways. You see, the “safe” world will try to define God in finite and limited ways. This is impossible! In the “unsafe” world you will leap beyond this and be tossed into the unknown and exposed to God more directly. That’s why it is unsafe. God is never safe.

And then there is Mystery. Mystery is dangerous. I am running out of space to explore this, and besides, we don’t know much, because it is, well, mysterious. And, if the mystics are correct, and I believe that they are, there is a great “cloud of unknowing” between us and Mystery. Few have gone there, fewer have returned to give us their sputtering, stumbling words that point us in that direction.

And then is ... “God.”

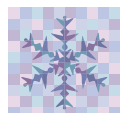
Pastor Pete

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THE POKE RUN OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON FEBRUARY 20TH.





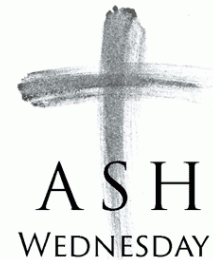
by Rafael (1516)

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY February 26, 2017

“...celebrates the glorious revelation of God in Jesus Christ and Christ’s manifestation as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Jesus’ radiant appearance on the mountaintop evokes the devouring fire of the glory of the LORD at Mount Sinai (Exodus 24.17). Here, as at Jesus’ baptism, God claims him as a beloved child, in whom God is well pleased.

In their account of this event, the synoptic gospels offer an enlightening *tableau vivant*, with Christ flanked by Moses, representing the law, and Elijah, representing the prophetic tradition. With this vivid image, the gospel writers demonstrate the relationship of the human Word of God to the tradition of Israel and set forth the hermeneutic by which they read the Hebrew Scriptures.”

“Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent... 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 Ash Wednesday with a Worship Service. Wednesday, March 1, 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.

The first Sunday of Lent will be March 5th.

Information on this page from the website of Presbyterian Mission Agency

Based in Pittsburgh, PA, Presbyterian Media Mission(PMM) is a faith-based non-profit media organization of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). PMM is supported by nine Presbyteries, two synods and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Office of Communication.



Thank you to everyone who participated in our January worship services.

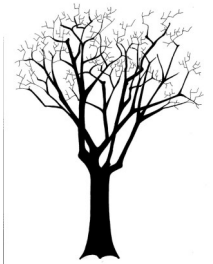
Our January Lectors: Josh Porterfield, Amy Wilkinson, Don Lengauer, Cliff Dupill, and Mike Goetschius

Our January Greeters: Walt & Becky Lange, Freda Bowman, Edyth Elwood, Cindy Brooks, Ruth O'Connor, Irma McDivitt, Bob & Darlene Thompson, and the Slaugenhaupt family.

"Thank you so much for your kindness and the wonderful luncheons. We really appreciated everything you did for our family."..... from the family of Ed & Betty Schmidt



For our prayers: Alex, Ang, Ed Bahney, Renee Bates, Ronda Bertelle, Lil Bowman, Kim Boylestein, Sarah Brank, Max Brooks, Ralph Brown, Stephanie Bruce, Carolyn Buckley, Cailleigh Chappell, Roxy Chickar, Irene Clark, Jim Dunmire, Elvira, Shirley Elwood, Barbara Emmerling, Jean Fanelli, Elmer Foley, Lee & Linda Gardener, Marnee Gormley, Helen Grayem, Allison Grundy, Trevor Hawk, Janine Hayle, Joyce Hodges, Leland & Berenice Jones, Marjorie Kaiser, Allison Lengauer Jordan, Pat Lengauer, Cliff Lightner, Norm Linhart, Ed Luther, Irma McDivitt, Conrad McQuaide, Amy McQuaide, JoAnn Miller, June & Roy Moorhead, Steve Morcheid, Carol O'Malley, Sandy Nemetz, Thad Overly, Sarah Parrish, Winifred Powers, Rafael Rincon, Steve Roman, Dwayne Smith, Mim Smith, Joanne Smith, Callie Spaulding, Dave Speer, Dinah Staymates, JD Stait, Kenny Swank, Bev & Mario Tagliati, Amy Teele, Jill Tocco, Terry Wiester, Clay Wilabee, Peter Yurtin, those gripped by addictions, and those who serve in the military.



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. 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.

From the Poke Run Presbyterian Church Session Minutes November 8, 2016

The scheduled meeting of the Session met @ 7:00 pm. A quorum was present and, Rev. Peter Goetschius, Moderator opened the meeting with prayer and devotions.

Session Members present: Rev. Peter Goetschius -Moderator, Chad McCutcheon – Assist. Clerk, Linda Chicka, Tim Martin, Ron Hileman, Linda Moorhead, Sandy Chappell, Cindy McQuaide, Jeffrey Wilkinson

Excused: Connie Cauvel – Clerk, Meri Slaughaupt

Correspondence:

Budget & Finance: Tim Martin – Tim reviewed the Treasurer’s Report for the month.

Christian Ed – Santa’s Breakfast on December 3

Mission and Stewardship: Linda Chicka-Adelphoi will help with Santa’s Breakfast.

Personnel: Doug Ross & Linda Moorhead-did not meet

Congregational Life: Connie Cauvel-setting up details for Presbytery meeting

Technology - Chad McCutcheon –no update

Nominating Committee: Cindy McQuaide & Sandy Chappell-Thank you! Thank you!

Old Business:

Presbytery meets at Poke Run on November 19. 9am-1pm. We will need Session members to serve Communion, welcome everyone, answer questions, facilitate our technology, and host. Breakfast casseroles are needed. Let Connie know if you can bring one. Trustees have been asked to direct traffic. Please arrive at 8:15 am.

New Business:

MSC to accept Berlin’s \$15,000 bid to install air-conditioning at the manse.

MSC to baptize Savanna Lynn Cox on November 20, 2016.

Discussion was had on developing a protocol for cemetery operations in the future. No final decision was made.

Close with prayer: Cindy McQuaide

Respectfully Submitted:

Chad A. McCutcheon

Chad A. McCutcheon (Asst. Clerk of Session)

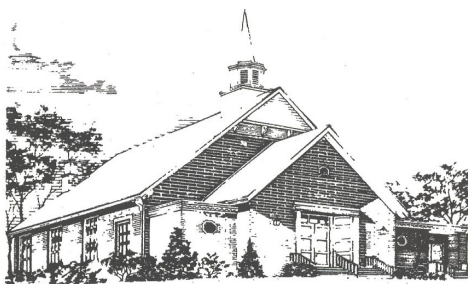
Adjourn: 8:20 pm

Approved: December 13, 2016

NOTE - due to inclement weather – the Poke Run Session did not meet in December, but instead met on January 10th for the months of December 2016 and January 2017.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE POKE RUN SESSION IS TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14th.

COMPLETE Session Minutes are kept on file in the office for member review.



Let us keep all our Poke Run officers, volunteers and congregants in prayer as we continue into 2017, calling “... the people of... surrounding communities to respond to the Good News of God’s saving love in Jesus Christ” from the Poke Run Mission Statement, 1993.

From the Poke Run Office

The annual Poke Run Financial Review was held. Thank you to all Treasurers and Auditors for providing the information needed and making time to attend the review. 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. 724-327-5563

Church Office

There are still 2017 Offering envelopes in the church Narthex, stop by and pick up your box—if there is not one with your name on it, feel free to take a blank.



In preparation for the 2017 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@graced.comcastbiz.net Thank you.

FIRST FRUITS

Poke Run Church has committed \$3,125 to Redstone Presbytery as part of their 2017 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. To date, just about 50% has been given.

Budget & Finance Committee

Firstfruits
Offering



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

Poke Run's email address: pokerun@graced.comcastbiz.net

The 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





The next “Soup for the Soul” will be Wednesday, February 8th.

(Wedding Soup) Bring a friend!

Becky Lange is providing “Valentine” desserts this month - but we will need dessert donations for March!

- 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!



Poke Run will be volunteering at the Westmoreland County Foodbank on Saturday, February 18th, 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 lqchicka@gmail.com .



The Annual Virginia Mission Trip is scheduled for June 25th through 30th. Linda Chicka plans to have applications ready soon, so see her or call the office if you are interested in attending. Also, please remember that you must have current Youth Protection clearances on file in the office to participate in this and many of our outreaches. Call the office if you ever have any questions about this. THANK YOU



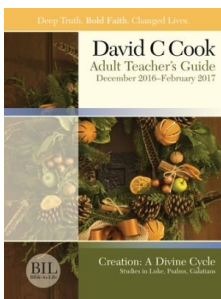
Sunday School at Poke Run Church

Classes meet each Sunday at 10am.

FOR THE KIDS Children’s Class! – Check the bulletin board in the hall as the kids map the life of Jesus to the Cross!

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

There are currently two active Adult Sunday School classes each Sunday morning.



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 “**Deep Truth, Bold Faith, Changed Lives**”

The class meeting in the Session room (on the right at the end of the hall) is using the study series, “**God’s At War – Defeating the Idols that Battle for Your Heart**” by Kyle Idelman.



Join in the fellowship area for refreshment and conversation between the early service and Sunday School.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN NEWS



Remember all the good food and fun last year?
Don't miss it THIS YEAR!

A "Fellowship Friendship Brunch" for the Poke Run congregation community— Men, Women and children – a "smorgasbord of brunch delight!" Make plans NOW to attend.
Saturday, February 11th
Doors open at 10:30am, brunch at 11am.



Women of the Church will be meeting on Thursday, February 16th, at 7pm at the church. The hostess will be Ruth O'Connor and the leader will be Cindy McQuaide. If this is a group you might be interested in getting involved with, come out and join in. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!.

Stories of Redstone

Christ at work in our midst



Moderator Sue Washburn
Serving as a bivocational pastor, Sue is the TE at the Reunion Presbyterian Church and the interim editor of Presbyterians Today. Her leadership within Redstone Presbytery has involved the Communications task force and now, the new network in addictions ministry. Connect with her on Facebook, Twitter or her blog.



Pete passing the gavel to Sue Washburn at the presbytery meeting. Smooth transition of power! (provided by Karen Goetschius)



Vice Moderator Joshua Scully
As a Ruling Elder of the Laurel Hill Presbyterian Church, he has also served as a member of the Committee on Ministry. Josh is also a frequent guest speaker in congregations around Redstone Presbytery. As a middle school social studies teacher, he also remains active as a basketball coach in school and for youth.



HAPPENING IN OUR PRESBYTERY

Feb 5th—"Souper Bowl of Caring" Delmont Presbyterian 4-6pm

Feb 6th—Grief Support meeting at Community Presbyterian, New Alexandria—



"Though grief and loss is something each of us face in our lives it is never easy. Sometimes it helps if we are not alone during this difficult time. All are welcome to join our grief and loss support group, regardless of religious affiliation. The Reverend Dr. Grafton Eliason has published extensively on this topic and will be leading this group. The group will start meeting on Monday, February 6, 2017 at 2 PM, at the Community United Presbyterian Church on the Keystone Park Road in New Alexandria. This group will meet for four (4) weeks."

Feb 12th—Spaghetti Dinner—Congruity Church, New Alexandria - noon—2pm

Feb 24-26th—Jr. Hi Retreat at Pine Springs Camp

Feb 28th—Pancake Dinner —4-7pm, Congruity Church, New Alexandria

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

REDSTONE PRESBYTERY OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON FEBRUARY 20TH

HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Feb 11th—Delmont Lion's Club "Pancake Breakfast" Delmont Methodist Church



PHOTOS WANTED!!!!

The Office can use emailed photos from cameras or cell phones. We'd love to include more pics from church functions.



The Next RANGER DEADLINE is February 21st. If you have news and pictures to share—contact the office!



Please use your best judgement for coming out to church events. And remember, there is no "winter maintenance" in the Poke Run cemetery. The Trustees report that the new pavement makes things exceptionally slick up there, so please please use extreme caution when

February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:30pm Bells 7pm Choir	2	3	4 
5 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	6 7pm Deacons	7 7pm Budget & Finance	8 11:30am "Soup for the Soul" 6:30pm Bells 7pm Choir	9	10	11 11am Fellowship BRUNCH "All Welcome"
12 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	13	14 7pm Session	15 6:30pm Bells 7pm Choir	16 7pm Presbyterian Women	17	18 8:30am Westmd County Foodbank
19 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	20 OFFICE CLOSED	21	22 6:30pm Bells 7pm Choir	23 7pm Trustees	24	25 
26 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	27	28 	If you have appropriate News to share in the Ranger—please submit it to the office. The next Ranger deadline is February 21st			

Poke Run Presbyterian Church

1091 Poke Run Church Rd.
Apollo, PA 15613

724-327-5563

EMAIL: pokerun@graced.comcastbiz.net

Website: www.pokerunchurch.com

Sunday Worship
8:30am & 11am



A "Fellowship Friendship Brunch" for the Poke Run congregation community– Men, Women and children – a "smorgasbord of brunch delight!" Make plans NOW to attend.

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