



# The Herald

Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church  
NewsLetter

May 2025

## From the Pastor's Desk

It was still winter outside when I stepped into the sanctuary for our Ash Wednesday service. The trees bare, the evenings long, and the season of Lent just begun. That was my very first service here with you all. Now, just a few weeks later, the daffodils and hyacinths bloom, the days stretch, and we've journeyed through Holy Week together. A lot can happen in a short amount of time.

I want to thank you for how warmly you've welcomed me and my family into this community of friendship and faith. It's no small thing to step into a new season in a new place, and I've felt your care and intention very, very often.

Several friends have visited our worship service to show support. They've noticed the cheer and friendliness of our worship service, which is no small thing. Laughter and connections happen outside of Sunday as well. The Chili Cook-off did not disappoint, and neither did serving food with Hope on a Mission in downtown Poughkeepsie. In the pictures, you'll notice smiles. Worship, fellowship, and service bring uplift, help, hope, community, and joy to ourselves and others.

Our Maundy Thursday and Easter services were filled with powerful music and the liturgies turned our eyes to the grace-centered relationship we enjoy with God. May the gospel continue to have a home in our hearts.

As spring settles in around us, I'm reminded that resurrection isn't just a one-day celebration—it's a persistent, often quiet promise. It meets us in tired moments, in laughter over food, in the reawakening of earth's colors, and in the gathered body of Christ.

Peace to you and grace for the journey,

Pastor Jason

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# Message from the Parish Nurse

## Come Along With Me

When Jesus called Peter and Andrew, He told them, "Put down your nets and follow Me. I will make you fishers of men." Without hesitation, they dropped their nets — their very livelihood — and followed this stranger on the journey of His life, a path directed by God. In many ways, a parish nurse's journey, while different, also answers a calling from God.

Being a parish nurse is a journey filled with both joy and sorrow. There are moments of laughter shared with patients, but also moments of deep sadness as I walk with them and their families through difficult diagnoses and end-of-life decisions. More times than I can count, I've sat in my car in the parking garage at Vassar Medical Center, mopping up tears after a pastoral care visit. Life has a way of unfolding whether we are ready for it or not — and often, our plans do not match God's plans.

Each Sunday morning, people visit my office for many reasons: to have their blood pressure checked, to ask about test results, to seek advice on medical decisions, or simply to share how they're doing. These conversations often start simply, but sometimes they take unexpected turns. What seems like a minor issue can lead to surgery and rehabilitation. Sometimes, a diagnosis can worsen, leading to hospital stays, home care, or, sadly, even a funeral. I've walked this road with several beloved members of our congregation. I often remind people: wherever your journey takes you — hospital, rehab, long-term care, or beyond — I'll be there. That's why there are many tearful moments for me in that parking garage.

As a parish nurse, I don't just get to know my patients — I get to know their families, and yes, even their pets. It's one of the hardest jobs I've ever had, but also one of the most meaningful.

Through the Parish Nurse program, I've served in many roles: as a health counselor, an educator, a guide through the healthcare system, and a bridge between our congregation and the wider medical community. Pastoral care has brought me to rehab centers, nursing homes, funeral homes, and funeral services. Over the years, I've seen something wonderful too: you are taking better care of yourselves, honoring the gift of life God has given you. You're becoming more informed and more responsible about your health. Keep it up — it's inspiring to see!

We all have an "end date" written on us, but the real goal is to live life fully until that day comes.

Blessings,  
Bonnie Biskup, RN, B.S.T.  
Parish Nurse

# The Appalachian Service Project

**When: July 12-19, 2025**



Twenty years ago Freedom Plains began its work with The Appalachian Service Project (ASP), under the leadership of The Rev. Paul Lent. ASP is a non-governmental organization that was founded in 1969 by a Christian man named "Tex" Evans. Tex was known to say, "We accept people right where they are, just the way they are." ASP works to

better the lives of people living in substandard housing in Appalachia.

This year we will bring another group of youth and adult volunteers down to Clay County, West Virginia to help make people's homes "warmer, safer & dryer" by doing high impact home repairs. We will leave on July 12th and return on July 19th. Part of the experience is befriending our home owners and sometimes making lasting friendships. We sleep in local churches or school buildings and we eat food often prepared by local people from the community.

Our groups have built ramps, painted walls, done underpinning, we have hung siding, we have put on new roofs, and laid new floors. We have taken walls down and built fresh new ones in their place. We have used jigsaws, table saws, chop saws and miter saws. Some people are partial to using the circular saw because it can cut through REBAR, which feels pretty powerful.

If you are interested in joining our crew please speak with Heather Finck or Aimee Heinly (aimeeheinly@optonline.net) ASAP to see what is possible.



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# Confirmation Calls

**Zachary Butts, Wayne Evert, and Madison Heitman**



We are excited to welcome three new church members into our fellowship. Two seniors and one sophomore in high school. Wayne came to us through enjoying the ministry of ASP (Appalachian Service Project) last summer. Maddie came to us because of a hunger to get closer to God and Zach brings a rich family history in the church with a curiosity to know more.

We all meet God in different ways. Some listening to a good sermon, others on a walk in the woods, and still others swinging a hammer to help create something new for a stranger. The Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways. "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8) We walk this path trying to

embody Christ's love and inclusion; trying to model forgiveness and mercy. With these new members may we at Freedom Plains United grow to become more like Jesus in each new day.

If you missed their speeches, please visit the <https://www.fpupc.org/view-sunday-service> website to see April 27th service.

## Youth Group- Junior High

Woohoo!

We will meet twice before summer. People who will be entering 6th grade next fall are welcome to join us for our two meetings.

We will meet **Friday, May 9th** and **Friday, June 6th** from **3pm to 5pm**.

We will play games, talk about faith, eat snacks and have fun getting to know each other. Youth are encouraged to bring a friend and Heather still needs another adult for both meetings and someone to bring a snack. Please call or text Heather if you can help. (845)249-5734

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# Rummage Sale

## Rummage Sale Details: May 17, 2025

This is a major Fundraiser for our church and it takes a Village to run this, so your help is deeply appreciated. Sign-up, after Church, in Fellowship Hall: to Volunteer or donate food. There are many opportunities to work, for as little as 2 hours or all day!

Thank you for your Donations!!!

Please do not donate Cribs/Playpens/Car seats, Mattresses, Computers/Printers, TV's, Pullout sofas/large overstuffed furniture, Exercise bikes/Treadmills, Medical Equipment

**May 11 (Sunday): Set-up Sunday:** 11:30am, we need all able-bodied folks to help move furniture for set-up. It should take under an hour to set up.

**May 12-16 (Monday-Friday):** Drop of donations Monday-Friday 9am-2pm. We will be sorting donations every morning 9-12. Please stop by to help.

**May 12 (Monday) and May 15 (Thursday):** Early Evening Donation Hours 4-7pm These extended hours are available because the building is locked every day, after 2pm.

**May 16 (Friday):** Drop off food and Bake Sale items in the church kitchen @ 9am-2pm

**May 17 (Saturday):** Rummage Sale and Flea Market 9am - 3pm, we need volunteers!

**May 17 (Saturday):** 3:30 pm Rummage pack up and tear down, we need your help



HELP NEEDED!!!The Rummage Committee is looking for someone with experience selling on EBay and Market Place. We often get special items donated at the Rummage Sale and other times during the year. Many times, it is more appropriate to sell these items individually, online. If you have the knowledge and would be willing to volunteer your time, please contact Nancy Townsend.  
(NancyTownsend9063@gmail.com)



# Committee News and Notes

## **Earth Stewards Committee-** Love The Earth Garden

### **A history of the garden**

In 2022, the Earth Stewards decided to start a pollinator garden on church property. Basically, we wanted to do our part to help pollinators: bees, birds, butterflies, and other insects that are in decline.

The property committee set aside an area for the garden that was larger than the Earth Stewards had envisioned, but we forged ahead undaunted. We hired an expert to provide a garden design namely master ecological gardener Karin Ursula Edmondson. The design included mostly native plants and some cultivars that tolerate droughts, torrential rains and rising temperatures and provide food to pollinator insects and birds. In the fall of 2022, we hired Roger Landscaping to level and construct the paths and put down topsoil. We secured three rain barrels to allow us to collect 1000 gal of rainwater from the roof. Neil Townsend and the Earth Stewards designed and constructed a water collection Iso contributed much needed funding for the construction and plant costs.



Planting began in the spring of 2023 and continued in the fall of 2023. Many church members helped with planting and mulching as well as friends from the community, Arlington High School students, and Cub Scouts from Troop 182. The rain barrels and water delivery system with some buried drip hoses, were critical that year to be able to start the garden since we had a drought in May and June. In 2024 the established perennials continued to flourish. We solicited names for the garden from the congregation and settled on Love the Earth Garden.

### **An Invitation**



Today the garden is thriving with over 500 plants including 3 trees. This spring we plan to complete the path from the garden up to the parking lot. In the summer, you will see and delivery system that could provide water to the garden 400 feet away.

We were fortunate to obtain one of the first grants from Partners for Climate Action of the Hudson Valley to help with the cost, but individual donors amany pollinators there and in the winter the birds come to feast on the seed pods. Please take a stroll through the Love the

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Earth Garden and enjoy the beauty and observe nature at its best. Bring your phone or camera and send us photos. The garden may not be as well-kept as your favorite botanical garden, but it is beautiful for those who love the earth and want to see pollinators flourish.

## Visibility Committee

Special THANKS to Nancy Redkey and Susan Conrad for getting all of the pictures and names on the Lay Leadership page of our website.

# The Hudson River Presbytery

### Email Phishing / Scams / Fakes

Presbytery staff, committee chairs, or anyone related to the Presbytery will never email you asking for gift cards or favors (except to serve on a Presbytery committee). Please delete and ignore these messages (there is nothing we can do on our end). All official emails from Presbytery staff come from an address ending in @hudrivpres.org.

## In Loving Memory

Bonnie and Lou Biskup's son Mark

Beth DeFiglio's sister Linda

Isabel Plambeck's sister Mary Agnes

Julie Donato's father, Charles Martyn and mother, Ruth Martyn

There will be a memorial service for Lois Miller on June 14th.

Ian Williamson memorial service will be on June 20th.

## Welcome

Daphne Michaela Shea, born on December 17, 2024 to Clara Sheets and Brian Shea, grandmother Ruth Sheet

# Back Page Fun

## Breakfast anyone?



Serving breakfast the day before Easter to our neighbors in the city of Poughkeepsie through Hope On A Mission

## Lagrange Community Day

FPUPC will be exhibiting at this year's Lagrange Community Day at Freedom Park on Saturday, June 14th, from Noon to 5:00pm. Please feel free to join us in meeting and greeting our local community.

## Chili Cook Off: And the winner is?



The ASP!!!! The Chili Cook Off showcased some very delicious and creative dishes all of which wowed the judges. But the biggest winner is this year's ASP volunteers.

Rev. Jason Elder, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Heather M. Finck, Associate Pastor  
Montana Smith, Music Director  
Diane Wassick, Music Accompanist  
Bonnie Biskup, Parish Nurse

Anna Strong, Christian Ed Coordinator  
Meredith Travelpiece, Bookkeeper  
Sean Date, Sexton  
Susan Conrad, Clerk of Session  
Gerry DeFiglio, Acting Treasurer

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