



The Beacon • October 2025

Saint Peter's United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Kimberly Stryjak, Minister

2901 Curtis Road, Reading, PA 19609 • stpucc.com • officeadmin@stpucc.com
610.678.3621

October!! It seems impossible to me that we have turned another page in our calendars, and it is already sweater weather. Yet, it has definitely started to feel like fall. The air is crisper, and the days are shorter. There is much that this month brings to my family and to the life of our church, and I think we can see God in the midst of it.

There is joy in the fall. When the leaves fall and we hear the squeals of kids jumping into a big fluffy pile. When we gather with friends around the fire pit and the temperatures drop with the sunset. When we pass yards and porches donned with decorations of the season - flowers, mums, pumpkins, hay bales, corn stalks, or with spookier Halloween décor (90-foot-tall skeletons, anyone?). And also as we gather together for times of fellowship and fun, like our Oktoberfest celebration; we find simple ways to share joy with those around us.

During fall we experience God's grace — unmerited favor or courteous goodwill. I think specifically about Halloween and the grace of candy received at neighborhood doors. We don't do anything to earn that candy - sure we might be in costume or say trick or treat - but really, we get to go house to house and be rewarded with candy without doing much. What more is an example of God's grace than that! Just like showing up at our neighbor's door, when we stand before God, we are given the free and unmerited favor and love of God.

We experience God's generosity and abundance when we find an unexpected roadside stand with pumpkins and mums, when we go apple picking, or when we bake and share the sweetness with family and friends. During our outreach moments such as at the Guts & Glory

Expo we can share God's love with others through interactions, information sharing and crafts. And we can experience God's love through the generosity of others.

October gives us many opportunities and the ability to let our light shine before others. It provides moment for us to experience God in unexpected ways. So, whether you will be attending Guts & Glory, Oktoberfest or any of our other plentiful events this fall, or if you are relaxing around a fire pit with friends, decorating your front porches or simply sharing a smile with a neighbor, may we all be open to sharing God's light in this world in unexpected ways and in unexpected places.

—*Pastor Kim*

Honoring the Rev. Dr. Kris Hayden

For everything there is a season
and a time for every matter under heaven. —Ecclesiastes 3:1

Thanks to those who responded to our call to share memories of the Rev. Dr. Kris Hayden's time at Saint Peter's. Your heartfelt words will help us craft a meaningful resolution to name him pastor emeritus. That document will go to Consistory and then to the congregation for approval before being sent for review by the Conference. Once it is approved by the conference, Consistory will choose a date to confer this honor and hold a celebratory luncheon. You can look forward to more updates as the plans for this wonderful celebration unfold.

Stewardship

The month of October brings us to the official start of our Stewardship campaign for the upcoming calendar year. In last month's Beacon we announced our 2026 theme of *Sharing the Good News* which we hope challenges us to look at how Saint Peter's members can work together to cultivate faith and to share the good news of hope and salvation through Jesus.

In the upcoming weeks worship service will feature topics or speakers that guide us in our stewardship and on November 9th will have a Consecration Sunday in celebration of all your generosity and support of St. Peter's, now and in the future.

During this time, we will also ask you to prayerfully consider how you will support the missions and ministry of St. Peter's UCC. Here in the church office we're working on projects that we believe encourage coming together and working together in a variety of ways that set us up for a long future of sharing the good news. As our Stewardship campaign unfolds, we look forward to sharing more details about such projects.

“Together We Are One”

One small project emphasizing sharing and working together is the makeover of the “welcome” bulletin board located in the Community Center vestibule. We’re asking members of both our congregation and of our partner community groups to collaborate on the design. In this fun way, all those who share the community center with us and who are important to our work and mission can be a part of the creation. Throughout October we will make the supplies available, and we invite you to decorate small cut-out crosses that will create the larger design.



Neighbors In Need

A Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ

We will collect the **Neighbors in Need** Special Mission Offering during worship on Sunday, October 5. Gifts to Neighbors in Need (NIN) support the United Church of Christ’s ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). The other two-thirds of the offering support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, direct service projects, and grants. Neighbors in Need grants are annually awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities.

HRM Clothing Drive Update

Hope Rescue Mission called. You answered. We are once again blessed with and amazed at the generosity of our congregation in answering the call to help provide clothing to those in need. With our latest clothing drive held throughout August - after packing it into 13-gallon size bags for easy transport - we counted that we collected 40 bags worth of clothing! Hope Rescue Mission is always so grateful to us for partnering with them and we expect to host another clothing drive either late winter or early spring of 2026.

Spaghetti Dinner & Blood Drive Update

The combined blood drive, spaghetti dinner and raffle event proved once again to be a big hit with blood donors, members of the church and others from the community, raising close to \$2000 this year and 30 units of blood collected for Miller-Keystone.

Planning and putting on this event is a big undertaking, but success is the reward. Thank you once again to the team who coordinated, shopped, prepped, sought donations, spent hours making meatballs or who worked during the event in some capacity to make it run smoothly. And congratulations to Tom, and Sue Yeager for putting on their most successful raffle sale to date!

Upcoming – Guts & Glory Expo



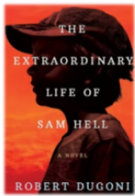
Saturday, October 4. 11 AM - 3 PM, Jim Dietrich Park, 4899 Stoudts Ferry Bridge Rd, Reading. This community wellness focused event is near and dear to our members Alicia Lee and Derek Rutter as they have been key participants over the years and have invited Saint Peter's to join them in promoting wellness. We ask for volunteers to help at Saint Peter's table as we highlight what our church does to support wellness in the community through our faith. Our booth will feature pumpkin painting for youth, a Saint Peter's themed raffle, small items for sale, and information about our church's mission and ministries. If you are able to volunteer to represent our church at this event, please reach out to Derek Rutter: 610-334-9200 or email derektrutter@gmail.com

Upcoming – Oktoberfest & Cornhole Tournament



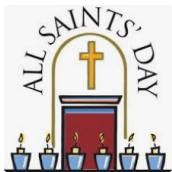
Saturday, October 4, 4-7 PM. We hope you will join us for an evening of fun, food, fellowship, and friendly competition - come, join the celebration and get ready to compete! The Cornhole tournament starts at 5:30 and is free to enter.

Upcoming – Fall Book Club



Thursday, October 30, 6:30 PM. Sign up for the fall book club which Brian and Kim Barndt are hosting at their home! The selected book is "The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell".

Upcoming – All Saints Day



Sunday, November 2, we celebrate All Saints Sunday.

Please email us at officeadmin@stpucc.com, or call the office to let us know if you have someone special you would like us to remember during worship.

Upcoming – Saint Peter's Craft Fair



Sunday, November 2. We are hosting our 2nd ever craft fair fundraiser.

Registration is still open for vendors but is filling up quickly. If you know of a vendor who wants to participate but isn't signed up yet, please share this QR code with them ASAP so they don't miss out. This is a wonderful opportunity for crafters to market their talents in the lead up to the holidays! [See our flyer below.](#) Flyers are also available in the Welcome Center to take and share with anyone you know who might like to sign on as vendor or come and shop.

Covenant Association Fall Meeting

Pastor Kim attends the Covenant Association's fall meeting each year along with one or two delegates from Saint Peter's. ***Please reach out to Pastor Kim if you would like to represent St. Peter's as a delegate.*** Or, if you would simply like to become more involved and informed about the way the Covenant Association works within the UCC in our region, you are invited to be an observer at the fall meeting taking place October 26, 2 PM @ Good Shepherd UCC in Reading (170 Tuckerton Rd).

Dates At a Glance

October 4	Guts & Glory Expo, 11 AM-3PM @ Jim Dietrich Park Oktoberfest, 4-7 PM-Cornhole tournament @ 5:30 PM
October 5	Spiritual Council Meets Communion (<i>World Communion Sunday</i>)
October 19	Consistory Meets
October 26	Breakfast with Purpose, 11 AM Covenant Association Fall Meeting, 2 PM @ Good Shepherd UCC
October 30	Fall Book Club @ the Barndt residence, 6:30 PM
November 2	<i>All Saints Sunday</i> St. Peter's Craft Fair, 11 AM-3 PM



event is rain or shine!

**Saint Peter's
UCC**

ST. PETER'S

Craft Fair

@ 2901 Curtis Rd, West Lawn
2 November 2025
11 AM - 3 PM

vendor spaces available!

Signup as a vendor:

\$25*
spot

For more info, contact:
officeadmin@stpucc.com
610-678-3821

* plus a donation for a raffle prize

