



## **The First Presbyterian Church Lewisburg, PA**

### **THE MISSION STUDY**

*“Living fully in Christ through His Word, community and mission.”*

**FINAL DRAFT**

Approved By The Session  
August 26, 2018

Jessie Walsh and Victor Vogel, Editors



# **THE MISSION STUDY**

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
LEWISBURG, PA**

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## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Lewisburg, Pennsylvania has been listed as one of America's top ten small towns. First Presbyterian Church is located in the borough of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. Recently nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, Lewisburg is home to Bucknell University, a private, highly selective national liberal arts institution founded in 1846. Characterized by a unique lamp-lit downtown with Federal and Victorian architecture of the 1800s, the downtown area contains many unique shops, restaurants, and galleries. The Lewisburg Farmer's Market—the largest market of its kind in the area—is open every Wednesday where you can purchase fresh produce, baked goods, meat, crafts, and a host of unique products. Lewisburg also hosts large community events throughout the year that draws thousands of people to the borough, including the Winter Ice Festival, the Lewisburg Arts Festival, and the Union County Veterans Hometown Independence Day Celebration.



Points of interest and recreational opportunities abound in Central Pennsylvania. The nine-mile Buffalo Valley Rail Trail connects Lewisburg with the community of Mifflinburg. Within a 30 to 45-minute drive you can reach nationally top-rated Knoebels Amusement Park. Getting out into the mountains to hike, swim, bike, or just picnic and enjoy nature is easy at R.B. Winter State Park. Penns Cave—America's only all water cavern and wildlife park—is just a little further down the highway. Williamsport, home of the Pittsburgh Pirates affiliated Crosscutters and Little League World Series, is also very accessible. Drive a little more than an hour you can find yourself in State College, home to Penn State University and one of the best college towns you will find. Heading south, Hershey Park and Chocolate World can be a very tasty option. Of course, along the way to any of these places you will find any number of antique/flea markets, farmer's markets, nature preserves, museums, and Amish and Mennonite communities that all contribute to the uniqueness of the area. For those who crave the city, Lewisburg is within an easy three-hour drive to Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. In addition to the many cultural and athletic events offered by the University and the Borough, the surrounding region offers outstanding schools, medical facilities, and affordable cost of living.

The Lewisburg Area School District is comprised of four schools: Kelly Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten-Grade 3), Linntown Elementary (Grades 4-5), Donald H. Eichhorn Middle School (Grades 6-8), and Lewisburg Area High School (Grades 9-12). In 2017-2018 the high school enrollment was 622 students. According to 2018 Niche.com data, Lewisburg is ranked #41 of 640 in Best College Prep Public High Schools in PA with a 95% graduation rate and reported average SAT Score of 1230.

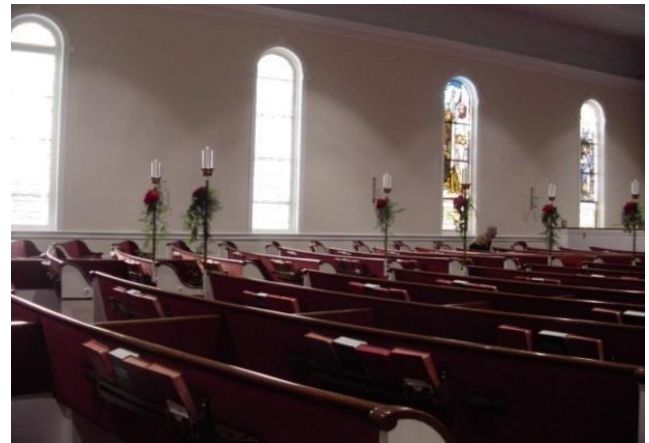
The Borough of Lewisburg is the county seat of Union County. The Lewisburg zip code of 17837 is comprised of the borough (population approx. 5700) and the surrounding townships of East Buffalo (population approx. 6400), and Kelly (population approx. 5500). Union County itself has a population of approx. 45,000. The demographic breakdown of the county is roughly 87% White/Caucasian, 7% African American, 5% Latino, and 1% Asian or other (all according to US Census Bureau). The median household income is \$49,803, median property value is \$160,200, and the poverty rate is 12.8% (Data USA).

The primary employers of the area include Bucknell University, Evangelical Community Hospital, Geisinger Medical Center (in nearby Danville, PA), and the Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary.

## HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION

The land that is now Union County Pennsylvania was frontier until after the conclusion of the French and Indian War (1763). After William Penn purchased the territory, the Delaware Indians reluctantly moved to Ohio, but periodically returned to harass the settlers. Life was fraught with danger and hardship. Nonetheless, by the 1770's a sturdy band of Presbyterians had assailed the wilderness, carved farms out of forests and put down their roots in this new fertile land of the Susquehanna River Valley.

In 1773, they were ready to organize the first church of their denomination west of the Susquehanna River. These people, most of whom were of Scotch-Irish descent, planned a church in a centrally located area, four miles west of the Susquehanna, at Buffalo Crossroads. By 1823 the Buffalo congregation had grown to 273 members. It was a long ride or walk to Buffalo Crossroads Church for those who came from surrounding areas. The time to develop local churches had come. The Buffalo Church planted 5 daughter churches, Mifflinburg in 1818, Laurel Run (later Hartleton) in 1831, Bethel (Later the Washington Church, Allenwood) in 1832, Lewisburg in 1833 and New Berlin in 1842. 39 members transferred from the Buffalo church to the First Presbyterian church of Lewisburg in 1833, which was to be under the guidance of the Reverend Thomas Hood.



As Ludwig Derr laid out Derrstown, in 1785, the forward-thinking Presbyterians who were worshipping at the Buffalo Church (but living in the developing Derrstown) purchased several lots and used them as the Presbyterian cemetery. Not until the 1810s did development start to change the face of Derrstown, now



Lewisburg, Lewis being the Anglicized form of Ludwig. When the time came for the Lewisburg Presbyterians to build their church building, they had to seek an alternate location due to the original lots being used as part of the Presbyterian Graveyard. Hence, William Hayes, in addition to donating money to build a church, donated a lot located on the Northwest corner of Front and St. Louis Street for the construction of the Lewisburg Presbyterian Church.

The Northumberland Presbytery approved the original petition, for a Presbyterian church to be constructed in Lewisburg on April 15th, 1833.

This first church building was begun in 1832 and finished on July 31, 1833. On the 4th of August 1833 Rev Thomas Hood preached from the pulpit for the first time. The physical appearance of the new church building is relatively unknown. It was situated on a knoll, overlooking the Susquehanna. It was a one-story structure, probably made of wood. Tradition tells us that no provision had been made for heating, a problem as the winter drew near. They made an excavation under the floor, and a common stove was placed there. After the congregation was "smoked out" one Sunday, flues were installed in the west end of the building. The original structure served a growing congregation for a quarter century.

With prayer and vision, plans were made for a simple but inspiring house of worship that would serve its congregation for many generations to come. On June 14th, 1857 the congregation met in joyous celebration to dedicate its newly finished meeting house, the same gem of Greek Revival architecture in which we worship to this day. The *Lewisburg Chronicle and West Branch Farmer* described the scene of June 14, 1857 this way:

"its graceful spire rises 153 feet from the ground. The edifice is 96 by 56, standing 20 feet back from the street. It is built of brick, ornamented on the side with pilasters and painted a drab color. The main front entrance is between 2 pillars, the large door being surmounted by stained glass. A flight of stairs leads to a hall from which are doors opening into the three-aisle main audience room, 2 doors to the gallery at the south end of the house and 2 other doors leading to the basement. The seats are uniformly cushioned, stuffed at the back and covered on both sides with crimson damask. The cost of the building and furnishing is probably 12 – 14,000 dollars."

Over the years the building has been updated and renovated. The original kerosene lighting was replaced first by gas then by electricity. A hand-pumped organ was replaced in 1890 by one pumped with water that in 1927 was transformed to electro-pneumatic action. The organ with its pipe chamber concealed behind screening was completely rebuilt during the 1967 sanctuary renovation. The windows, no longer plain as in 1857, now are beautiful stained glass. During the 1967 renovation, these windows, which were seriously deteriorating, were repaired and protected by a clear double-over-glazing to preserve them. The extensive 1967 renovation of the sanctuary and church building, which included structural and cosmetic changes, took nearly a year and cost \$192,000. In a time when gas cost 33 cents a gallon, a first class stamp was 5 cents and the average household income \$7,100, this was a huge undertaking.



By the 1990's it was time to renovate again to facilitate the needs of the growing church. It was then that the church you see today took shape. The land between the church and the manse was cleared of a garage and a beautiful old Spruce tree. The wood from that tree was made into the pews, communion table, lectern and cross that are in the chapel on the first floor. As the excavation for the foundation progressed an "occupied" grave was uncovered. An anthropologist was called in to determine the heritage of the long-time attendee of the church. He was found not to be Native American, so the construction could proceed after he was moved to the Lewisburg Cemetery. The Great Hall, kitchen, Christian Education wing, offices, parlor and chapel were all constructed during this renovation. In 2007, in honor and celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the church, a modest renovation to the chancel was undertaken. This renovation allowed more flexibility of the chancel for worship and the many programs that were a part of the fellowship experience.

On the west side of the sanctuary building is the William D Himmelreich Memorial Library (see below).

On the east side the church stands a beautiful Victorian home. The Manse, built in 1869 of red brick and fine wood work, was the home of pastors for 130 years. Its ornate front porch protects the four 10-foot

tall first floor windows and carved, double front door. Inside, its grand 12 foot high ceilings, marble surrounded fireplaces and sweeping staircase speak of a time gone by, a time when \$ 7,000 built a gracious and spacious home.

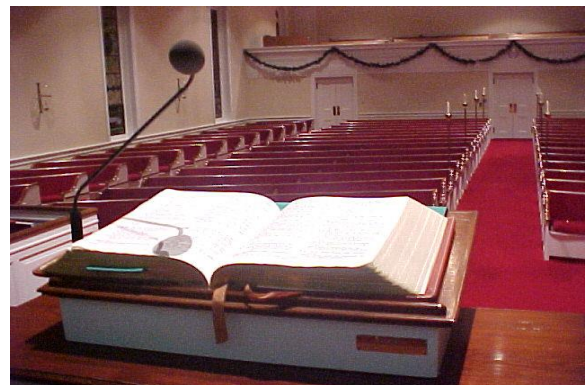
Pastors and their families helped to mold and shape the lives of so many in the church. From 1858 to 1901, nine pastors served the church. As the thriving church moved into the 20th century the spiritual emphasis was on evangelism. Welling Evan Thomas was called as pastor in 1901. The manse was a busy place at that time as Dr and Mrs. Thomas had six children. Norman Thomas, their eldest son later became a bit of a celebrity as the six-time Socialist Party nominee for President of the United States. Frank Everitt served the church from 1916-1929 when times were changing within the church. The mainstay of church income from the earliest days was pew rent. In 1926 the financial system of pledges and free will offerings was adopted, arising from a desire to give faithfully, without recognition and with reliance on God.



In 1931, Edward Junkin accepted the call to the Lewisburg Church. Mr. Junkin, born in Korea, the child of missionaries, brought a fervent personal interest in missions. He was named Pastor Emeritus in 1961. It has been said by someone who grew up at this time that although the world was far from stable, there was a great sense of stability given in his life: there was one president,

Franklin D. Roosevelt, and one pastor. He was followed by pastors Westra and Gardner, Kurtz and Merritt, Wendell, Anderson, Smith and King. All were men who loved God and were called to serve Him and the congregations of the church in the later years of the 20th century. Most recently Dr. James King served our congregation for 17 years through 2017. Each man impacted many, and each man left a legacy of ministry and faithfulness to the congregation. This is a congregation that has enjoyed fellowship while loving the Lord, a congregation that has been a part of the families of so many. The congregation has embodied what Paul spoke about in 1st Corinthians: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it".

Faithfulness for 185 years and counting, from a quiet beginning's in the countryside to a move of independence at the riverside, the congregation at Lewisburg First Presbyterian desired to work for our Lord, Jesus Christ. From its first 39 members to nearly 400 today, God has used the people of this church to proclaim the Gospel to Lewisburg, the Susquehanna River valley and the world. Going forward let it be our prayer: "May all who come behind us, find us faithful".



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

**First Presby Kids**, the Children's Ministry of First Presbyterian Church, serves to reach children from birth through 5th grade with the message of God's love for us in Jesus.

On staff is a part-time Director of Children's Ministry to lead select programs and to recruit, train and equip ministry volunteers. Our weekly programs currently include: **Sunday School**, with 28 children in attendance and a rotating team of 14 teachers in four classrooms; **Cherub Choir**, taking place in the first 15 minutes of the Sunday School hour for preschool through 2nd grade; **Church Nursery**; **Kids Church**, for preschool through Kindergarten during the latter half of the worship service; **Big Idea**, for kids in 1st through 3rd grade during the latter half of the worship service; **Children's Story Hour**, at the adjoining Himmelreich Library, for kids of all ages.



Special First Presby Kids events include: a community **Easter Egg Hunt**; **VBS**, drawing over 100 kids from the surrounding area; **Summer Family Fun Nights**; Cherub Choir singing in worship services; kids' activities at our all-church picnic; packing party for **Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Collection Week**; Christmas program; **Birthday Party for Jesus**.

It is our mission through all our programs, events and activities to bring the truth of God's Word to life, to help children and families strengthen their walk with Jesus and to love kids just the way God made them. And through many of our events the Children's Ministry is integrated into the work and life of the church as a whole, so that we experience how "the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5).



*"The Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5).*

## YOUTH MINISTRY

**Fuel** - Middle School youth group that meets every Sunday evenings from 5-6:30pm in the Cave. We play games each week and learn more about Christ's love for us and what it means to have a relationship with the God of the Universe. We will be covering a variety of topics but have begun the year looking at fellowship and the book of Ephesians.

**Refuge** - High School youth group that meets every Sunday night from 7-8:30pm. Refuge is a place to escape the difficulties of everyday life as a high school student, chase after a deeper and more personal relationship with Christ and learn more about what it means to really give your life to Christ. We have weekly games, bible studies, small group discussion, and will have a mission trip to North Carolina this summer.

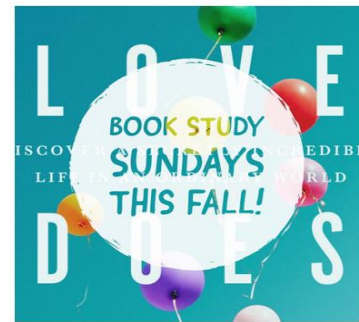
**Sunday School** - This is a time for both middle and high school to come together every week and continue to study the word. We meet every Sunday in the Cave at 9am and cover a variety of topics focusing on the struggles of life as a student in today's world and what the Gospels offer us as support, refuge, and advice.



**Girl Talk** - Carolyn McSween leads Girl talk. Carolyn picks the students up from school every Thursday and brings them to her house and serves as a time for middle school girls to come together, hang out, and have fellowship with one another.

**Wednesday Breakfast** - Wednesday breakfast meets every Thursday morning at 6:35am over at the manse. All high school guys are invited to come. This serves as both outreach to students that would never come to a "church event" and as a time for guys to come together, talk about whatever issues they may be dealing with, have fun, and build relationships.

**Thursday Breakfast** - Thursday breakfast is the same as Wednesday breakfast except for as it is specifically for high school girls. This is co-led by Matt Rishell, the Youth Director, and Kasey Bost, a student currently attending Susquehanna University who has been leading Young Life in Lewisburg.





## **ADULT MINISTRY**

The Sunday School program has been the main focus of the adult subcommittee. We offered four classes during each semester. This past semester a class was offered in the library during Sunday School and then again in the afternoon for community members. The class provides an outreach to the community and is a valuable use of our library. Goals for next year include, reviewing our small group ministry, strengthening ties with our library and community outreach. Continuing to review the needs of adult Sunday School

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

During 2017 the Christian Education Committee was reorganized to provide support to all ages of our education program and to provide ministry support through volunteers on the three subcommittees.



The Christian Education Committee meets on the second Monday of the month. It includes the leads from each of the ministry sub-committees: the director of children's ministry, youth ministry, and adult ministry. Members also include three elders, a deacon and a trustee.

Church volunteers and representatives from each of the ministries are also included.

The annual report includes activities from the children's ministry, the youth ministry, and adult ministry. This structure is new but already it is providing opportunity

for more volunteer input and support for our ministry leaders. The meetings are open and participants from the congregation are welcome to attend. Our objective is to provide opportunities for all ages to learn and grow in the knowledge of God's Word.

## **EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP**

The goals are to encourage our congregation to grow in their relationship to Jesus Christ and to each other. Our work includes:

- Reviewing pew pads and making appropriate calls.
- Looking for additional members.
- Encouraging the continuation of a person being available after the service for prayer and questions.
- Continuing the practice of prayer for the church before the service at 8:30 A.M.

## THE HIMMELREICH MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Almost from the day we opened our doors in 1902, **The William D. Himmelreich Memorial Library** has been hailed as, *"The finest library of its kind in the United States and second largest in the world"* which was established by its founder to be a unique institution, *"...with the Bible as its center."*

Dating from its roots as a Sunday School Library, in 1831 with a collection of 85 books, in 1891 William D. Himmelreich a Lewisburg businessman and active member of the church, purchased 500 volumes to form the nucleus of a library. Mr. Himmelreich's last will and testament endowed the library with \$15,000 for a building and \$15,000 for books – equivalent to over \$850,000 today. The building with its majestic columns outside and beautiful murals inside was dedicated eight years after Mr. Himmelreich's bequest, on November 7, 1902. Home to more than 11,000 books, DVDs, and CD's, the library — with its restored reading room — is a tribute to the generosity and faithfulness of Mr. Himmelreich.



**Circulation:** Our collection boasts over 11,000 fiction & non-fiction books, CD's, DVD's audio cassettes, video tapes, magazines, and Bible studies. Daily circulation (items checked out at one time) is between 325-500 items. We've added many new items while removing old, unused or outdated ones.

**Patrons:** Over 3,000 registered including new members. In database we group by geographic area. Most patrons are from Northumberland County followed by Union County, Lewisburg, and Snyder County. A few patrons visit from Schuylkill, Lycoming, and Juniata Counties.



**Community Outreach Programs.** In addition to weekly *Children's Story Hours*, *"Sunday Conversations"* is an ambitious new community outreach program presented 2:00 - 3:15 in The Himmelreich Reading Room. Participants travel from as far 30 miles to join these bible-based studies like *"Why the Reformation Still Matters," "Evidence That Demands A Verdict" (Josh McDowell), "The Case For A Creator" (Lee Strobel) and "The Prodigal God" (Tim Keller)*. Multi-Media. Refreshments served. All are welcome!

**The 5-Year Campaign.** Our 5-Year Plan was formally launched earlier this year on 21 January 2018 at First Presbyterian's worship service. The Himmelreich led this special worship service with the message, *"That the World May Know!" – presenting The Himmelreich as potentially our congregation's greatest evangelical asset.*

**The Worldwide Auction for The Himmelreich.** Thousands of dollars are being raised through online auction sales of donated books. **The Himmelreich Campaign Fund** reports a total balance of \$11,145.17 – a surplus of \$1,645.17 over the original deposit of \$9,500 from the Himmelreich endowment after 19 full months of operation.

## MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee membership consists of representatives from deacons, session and trustees as well as lay members.

We support a total of 20 different missions organizations, 8 local and 12 international, representing 28 different missionaries. Included are current church members Caroline Graves interning with Cru in Southeast Asia and Carley Shaffer interning with InterVarsity and former church members Tom and Lucy Wright with Mission to the World, Ted Tumau and his wife Carolyn with Global Scholars, Liz and Jesse North with InterVarsity and Liz Kidney with InterVarsity and their families.



Our budget represents approximately 20% of the total church budget. Each Mission/Missionary is partnered with one of our committee members. It is the responsibility of the committee member to maintain a relationship with, be the contact for, pray for and encourage each of the Missions/Missionaries they are partnered with.

Our Missions/Missionaries are provided with the opportunity to present themselves and their Mission at one of our monthly Mission of the Month presentations during the worship service and/or Sunday School. Our missionaries have also been a reliable resource for pulpit supply. First Presbyterian has always maintained a strong focus on missions with significant participation in ongoing ministry to the municipality of Camotan in Chiquimula, Guatemala. We partner with the Valdez family in providing medical care to several small mountain villages in an ongoing continuity relationship. We have sent medical and work teams to Guatemala for the past 15 years, and for the past 10 years to the same few villages allowing us to form significant relationships with the people we serve. As a result, our church was able to host a young man needing definitive tertiary medical care provided by the Geisinger Medical Center and its medical staff. Our church and the surrounding community supplied housing in the manse, meals, laundry services, clothing, custom made orthotic shoes, PT along with a big helping of love and friendship.

Finally, we support our high school youth financially and in prayer during their annual work camp mission trip.

The goal of the committee and First Presbyterian has been to see our world through God's eyes and to be His hands and feet as we love our neighbors locally and throughout the world.

## DINNER BY THE RIVER

Helping those in need is one mission of the First Presbyterian Church. The idea for this local community outreach was hatched during a discussion at a Guatemalan medical mission trip. We were providing help to the people there and asked ourselves what we could do to help those at home. Out of this exchange, and with the help of Larry Barnhart and Kathy Storm, the concept for a free weekly meal was formed. The goal was to serve those who are chronically hungry in Lewisburg and the surrounding area.

Larry and Kathy met with various agencies and connected with businesses who were participating in the government's *Feed America* program. From *Panera Bread* we receive weekly donations of bread and desserts. From *Wal-Mart* we receive produce, meat and desserts. Larry also opened an account with the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank from whom we purchase products at reduced prices.

In 2005, when everything was in place, an announcement of the program was presented to the church. Volunteers came forward to make everything work. Because of the positive response, nine individual teams were formed. Captains of the teams decided to name the weekly meal Dinner by the River. Some teams eventually disbanded, and new teams were formed. Currently, in addition to our Presbyterian church teams, we have teams from five different local congregations assisting in this mission activity, and we serve an average of 75 guests each week. Before each dinner, a devotion and grace are given.



## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The nominating Committee provides the slate of officers to fill the open positions on Session, deacons, trustees and members at large for the following year's nominating committee. The committee consists of 2 Session members (1 serves as chairperson), 1 Deacon, 1 Trustee and 4 to 5 members from the congregation. The committee meets as needed.

## **WORSHIP LIFE**

The Worship Life Committee meets regularly to plan each week's worship service, choosing the hymns and anthems. The Committee is responsible for providing pulpit supplies each week, finding monthly pulpit assistants, and planning for special services. The committee has recommends dates for communion to the Session and helps serve the communion. The Committee is also responsible for assigning people to serve as Ushers. Men women and youth are encouraged to serve as ushers.



## **CONGREGATIONAL LIFE**

The Congregational Life Committee strives to plan events for our church family and friends that will foster relationships within our congregation and beyond. We try to include a wide range of events providing opportunities for all ages to participate, have fun and connect with one another. We encourage people not only to participate in the events, but be a part of a team to bring the events to fruition. Congregational events include Easter breakfast, picnics, a strawberry festival, group hikes, bike rides, and a Christmas program with dinner.

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The Personnel Committee is chaired by an elder and has representation from Session, Trustees, Deacons, and the congregation. The committee has traditionally been responsible for coordinating the hiring of new church employees (with the exception of the Pastor) and conducting the Pastor's annual performance review. The committee also assists the Pastor in his role of Chief of Staff with conducting performance reviews of the church employees. In addition, the Personnel Committee develops, reviews, and modifies job descriptions and personnel policies. Finally, this body of volunteers strives to nurture a positive working environment at our church for our staff.

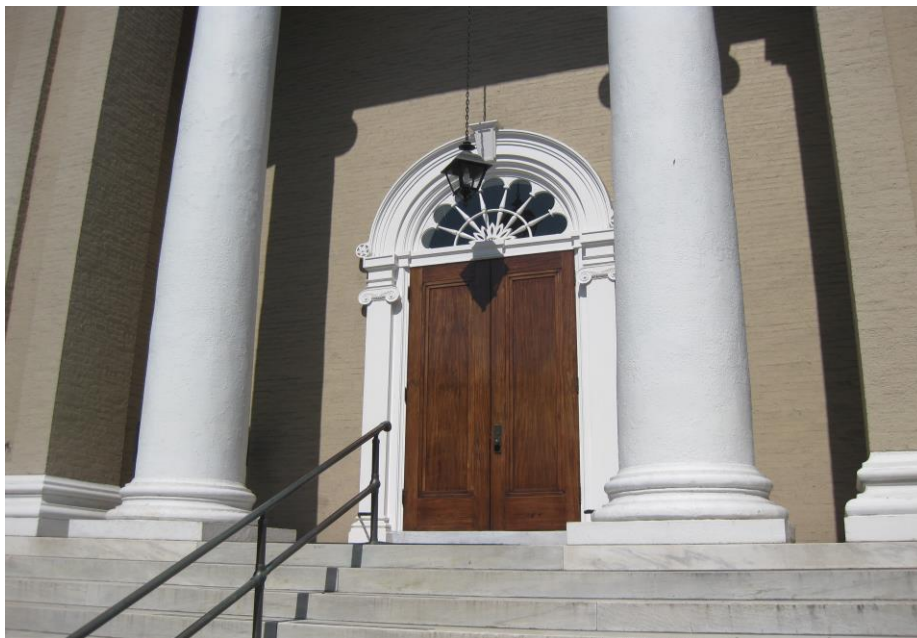
**STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS  
OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LEWISBURG**

**STAFF**

- Pastor (50 hours per week) – currently vacant
- Interim pastor (30 hours per week)
- Administrative Assistant (30 hours per week)
- Sexton (25-30 hours per week)
- Director of Youth Ministry (40 hours per week)
- Director of Children’s Ministry (20-25 hours per week)
- Director of Music (10 hours per week)
- Pianist (10 hours per week)
- Organist (rotates, pay per play)
- Treasurer (8 hours per week)
- Financial Secretary (10-12 hours per week)
- Librarian (25 hours per week)

**VOLUNTEERS**

- Coordinator of Worship Technology
- Coordinator of Dinner by the River



## THE DEACONS

First Presbyterian of Lewisburg's Board of Deacons includes fifteen members serving our congregation and local community by ministering to persons in need or distress, both within and beyond the community of faith. Ongoing services of the deacons include (but are not limited to):

- Coordinating greeter volunteers for weekly church services
- Distributing altar flowers weekly to encourage members/shut-ins/friends
- Preparing and cleanup of the elements for scheduled Communion services
- Coordinating receptions for new members, communicants, funeral services, etc.
- Regular visitation of shut-ins and nursing home residents
- Deliver holiday flowers- Easter pansies, fall mums and Christmas poinsettias
- Food coupons for designated recipients during Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas
- Facilitating LOVE Committee meals (1-2x) for members during illness, emergencies and/or special circumstances
- Discussing and taking appropriate actions for identified community financial assistance cases
- Endowing the Pastor's fund, a means for the Pastor to confidentially help a congregation member(s) with a defined need

In 2017, the Deacons served the Lewisburg community by funding food, temporary shelter, clothing and short-term financial support for many of God's children...those in need, sick, friendless or in distress. For example, First Presbyterian of Lewisburg's outreach program "Dinner by The River," (described above) is subsidized, in part, by the Deacon's Fund, regularly serves meals for up to 70 people each week. This program has been supported by The Crop Walk, donations from local businesses and numerous volunteers, teams from our congregation, neighboring congregations and other community organizations.

Additionally, the Deacons supported community efforts by the Lewisburg Council of Churches, including temporary lodging/bus passes for transient people in distress and financial assistance for qualified community residents. To qualify for financial assistance capped at \$300/family, candidates experiencing hardship submitted a comprehensive application to document proof of income and expenses. All cases referred by participating churches were vetted by the United Way using established criteria to ensure program integrity. During the Christmas season, several Deacons volunteered at the Lewisburg Food Bank and distributed apples, oranges and copies of "Our Daily Bread" devotionals available for recipients of the mission's holiday food baskets.

The Deacons supported the following community programs in 2017: Eastern Union County Clothes Share Program, Lewisburg Council of Churches (Union County Fund/General Fund), Meals on Wheels, Union/Snyder Habitat for Humanity, Hand-up Foundation, Love INC, Project Apple (Union County Children & Youth), Donald Heiter Center, Special Olympics, Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, the Lewisburg Food Bank, Susquehanna River Valley Dental Clinic and the William Cameron Engine Company Ambulance Service.

Deacon initiatives are funded by offerings/gifts to the Deacons fund and supplemented by interest money from the Ralph Wallace Richard Trust Fund- monies appropriated for humanitarian and charitable support within the greater Lewisburg community.

## THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees are a nine-member board of the church. As is typical, what we as a group understand for ourselves, from looking at other Presbyterian churches, we are responsible for the physical aspects of the church properties. Thus, we seek to retain the beauty of its physical appearance. But even more important, is the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings and their included systems such as: heating and cooling; organ/music; sound, communication and computer integration and security. All of this within the finances available to the Trustees from the Church. Our goal is to keep the beauty and functionality of the Church on-going for many generations to come.

Over the past two years, the board has had a significant changeover due to employer related issues. We are hopeful that the worst is past. Thus, we have more new people than normal, but good ones, on our board. We are coming together and starting to function as we need to do, learning what we need to know, while feeling the loss of the wisdom of those who had to resign and move away.

## THE CHURCH

The church is situated on the main (Market St.) east-west highway of the historical community of Lewisburg, PA. This street is also considered the downtown area of the town. The church can be found at the eastern end of the town, a half-block from the Susquehanna River, thus giving it the distinction of being called the “Church by the River.” There is a park between the church and the river, which is used for church-wide outings and picnics, including Easter Sunrise Services.

While the Lewisburg Presbyterian congregation can look at its history back into the latter half of the 1700’s, the current church building was erected in 1857. It sits about 20 feet. from the street and the sanctuary is raised about two flights of steps above ground – one flight of marble steps outside and the second flight inside the building. The Chapel is on the lower level along with other rooms and offices. There is a basement below that which formerly held two classrooms but now has two offices and is used by the youth programs. The building is made of brick, that has been painted a gray color.



The first major renovation to the building took place during 1967. Repair of deteriorating stained glass windows was accomplished along with structural and cosmetic to the sanctuary and building. The stained glass windows were again repaired in 2018. Around 1990, the congregation embarked on a second major renovation. A new wing was added that created more office space as well as the Christian Education building that provided a number of new classrooms and a general purpose room (The Great Hall) with a large kitchen.

## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The First Presbyterian Church of Lewisburg consists of three buildings.

1) **The Main Church** (*see above description*).



**2) The Manse** (*sitting adjacent, and to the east, of the church*).

The backyard was reduced to make room for the expansion of the Christian Ed Wing. This is a red brick, two-story home with a walk-up attic. The first floor has three large rooms and a large kitchen, which was recently remodeled. Our prior pastor chose not to live in the manse as seems to be the trend among many pastors. Because of this, a “re-purposing of the manse” committee was convened, and the decision was made to do no more renovations, unless circumstances dictated otherwise. It has been used as classrooms, and when a young man, along with his father, was brought from Guatemala, they lived there so he could receive life-saving medical treatment at a local medical center. For now, our new youth director is living there, and we are updating and renovating the second-floor bathroom.

**3) The Himmelreich Memorial Library** (*nestled on the west side towards the back of the main church*).

This is a Christian Resource Library that is a part of the church’s mission. It had been the community’s “Public Library” for a number of years until some community members raised the funds to build a secular library. As a Christian resource library, it is the second largest library of its kind in the U.S., outside of a seminary, and there are no seminaries within a hundred miles. It is a two-story building of beautiful architecture that was built in the 1890’s, funded by a \$15,000 bequest of William D. Himmelreich.

The Library has recently developed its own Board of Directors. The purpose of the board is to seek ways to improve services to the library’s patrons; expand its outreach and better identify itself to people of its local, as well outlying regions; to seek to become more financially self-supporting to reduce its reliance on the church mission funds; or, provide extra services without seeking additional funding.

The library remains open to the public.

#### **RECENT RENOVATIONS**

- Several have been described above.
- Four stain glass windows in the church were identified as “in danger of failing” and are now repaired. As of May 2018, 75% of the funds required for the repairs have been raised.
- One of four columns at the front of the library has been upgraded for better preservation.
- The library air-conditioning system has been replaced.
- Gutter and downspout work to reduce damage to the church’s outside walls

#### **WORK TO BE DONE**

- The heating/air conditioning system for the rest of the church is nearing the end of its useful life.
- The organ will either need to have a major overhaul or possibly be replaced.
- A committee is being formed to look at either a new computer server or a change in how we access on-line internet services.
- Remaining three columns at front of library need preservation, as well doing some significant maintenance to be identified, has been deferred.
- Replacing the projector in the sanctuary as well determining if we should also reposition the screen.
- Numerous repairs to the manse (e.g., roof, etc)

In total, these are going to be expensive and will require a fundraising campaign to accomplish the needed tasks. It is therefore imperative that we identify other major items/issues that may be needed so that one large fundraising campaign can support all maintenance needed for the next twenty years.



## **The First Presbyterian Church Lewisburg, PA**

### **THE MISSION STUDY**

*“Living fully in Christ through His Word, community and mission.”*

#### **CONTACT**

**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
18 Market Street, Downtown Lewisburg, PA 17837  
570-524-4419 (Phone)  
570-524-2741 (Fax)

The Reverend Barbara Yorks, Interim Pastor  
info@first-presby.org

#### **WEBSITES**

<https://www.first-presby.org/>  
<http://thehimmelreich.com/>

# I. Essentials in Unity

## A. One in Faith and in Doctrine

We Believe That all scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life.

The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts, culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority of all matters on which it speaks. (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21)

On this sure foundation we affirm these additional Essentials of our faith:

1. We believe in one God, the Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever!
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High priest and Mediator.
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of our sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth and seals us for the day of redemption.
4. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. The first evidence being the seeking of forgiveness of one's sins. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby declared righteous in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
5. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are

united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its fullness and the sacraments are administered with integrity; where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.

6. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth—personally, visibly, and bodily to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. “Yes, I am coming soon.” (*Revelations 22:20*)
7. The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the gospel throughout the world to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to the “the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (*Galatians 2:20*) He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (*Ephesians 2:10*)

## B. One in Commitment and in Practice

1. As Lord of our lives, Jesus Christ declared “that if we love Him we will keep His commandments.” These include the Ten Commandments and are summed up in Jesus’ teaching of “The Great Commandment”; “Love the Lord Your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”. (*Matthew 22:37*)
2. As Christ’s disciples we understand that we are to commit all to Him, considering even those we hold and love most dearly, secondary to our love for Him.
3. Though civil law and society allow for marital unfaithfulness on “every and any” grounds, the Lord of the Church clearly declares that divorce, “except for moral impurity”, is not permitted by God. The Apostle Paul adds to this, by the authority of the Holy Spirit, saying that abandonment by an un-believing partner is also grounds for divorce.
4. Because human life is God’s unique creation (created in His image), the sanctity of this life is un-questionable, and therefore the taking of unborn human life; of infant life deemed questionable quality, or of the lives of the elderly, or of the severely retarded or mentally impaired, violates the sixth commandment; “you shall not murder”. (*Exodus 20:13*)
5. Because God created human sexuality, differentiating humankind as

male and female, and ordained the complementary expression of our sexuality within the boundaries of heterosexual marriage, all sexual practice, heterosexual or homosexual, outside of the bounds of marriage violates His created order and commands.

### C. One in Responsibility for Spiritual Growth, Worship, Fellowship and Discipline

1. As followers of Jesus Christ we intentionally embrace His pattern and that of His Apostles for spiritual growth, worship, fellowship and discipline.
2. As members of Christ's Body, we are responsible not only for our own walk but for that of others in the fellowship, in order "that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (*Ephesians 4:12-13*)
3. God provides a way for us as individuals and as a church, to bring loving correction to bear on erring members of the body, without violating Christ's teaching against judging one another. Following a scriptural and Spirit-guided direction, if we see a fellow believer "overtaken in a fault". We are to go to them and, in a spirit of humility and gentleness, correct them with the aim of restoring them to fellowship.
4. In addition to participating actively in the life of Christ's Church through worship, fellowship, Bible study and prayer, we are also responsible to one another and to our Lord in our financial stewardship. According to our Biblical guide, the tithe is to be used as a starting point for systematic and proportionate giving.

## II. In Non-Essentials Liberty

### A. Liberty in Lesser Doctrine and Practice

1. What is a non-essential? Non-essentials denote those doctrinal issues and convictions which are secondary to the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe room should be given for freedom on lesser issues. Some issues may be important to the individual Christian, but such should not be promoted at the expense of unity.
2. Temptation as an allurement or appeal to sin, is not in itself sin, nor do we need to capitulate to temptation, "because we're only human." On the other hand, having the New Nature of Christ in us does not mean we are incapable of sinning.
3. When sin does enter our lives, God never gives up on us, even though He does not will for us to sin. Repentance of sin and confession of it brings forgiveness from God and freedom from guilt.
4. We can be kept relatively free from sin in our lives by asking God to fill us continuously with His Holy Spirit.
5. If a Christian who sins and does not want forgiveness due to the absence of repentance, he experiences the chastisement of God, the loss of comfort and assurance, hardness in his heart and conscience, and dishonor to the cause of God's Kingdom.

### B. Liberty in Government

1. First Presbyterian Church is a family that affirms the congregational freedom in conformation with the guidelines provided by the Book of Order to select officers from whatever category or quota. We are encouraged to search the scriptures and prayerfully, but freely, elect those persons best qualified to lead.
2. Believing unity to be a spiritual, not temporal, relationship, we therefore affirm a loving spirit of co-operation with all who are truly one with us in Jesus Christ.

## III. In All Things Charity

1. "Love Protects"  
Christ did not come just to teach forgiveness. He lived it! Being forgiven we are now free to forgive and understand each other. As a fellowship of believers, we strive so to love one another that the presence of the Spirit may transcend individuality.
2. "... always trusts"  
We believe not only in what we have attained in Christ, but also that we

are moving forward. We are God's pilgrim people. We are on a journey together, sharing each other's burdens and joys along the way. Though we have already been redeemed, our sanctification is the process we share together.

3. "always hopes"

Hope encourages and builds life, while despair destroys. Resisting the sins and sickness of this world, we as a fellowship are more than haters of evil. As lovers of God and His people, we live for His glory. Much more than mere wishing, our confident hopes are anchored in Christ.

## **I. In Essentials Unity**

### **A. One in Faith and in Doctrine**

1. Deut. 6:4; Genesis 1:1, 1:26; Mark 1:10-11; John 1:1, 5:26, chapters 14-16
2. Isaiah 53:5-6; Matthew 1:18-25; Mark 15:38, 16:6; Luke 1:26, 2:7&52, 24:51; John 1:1, 17:5, 19:13, 20:1-29; Acts 1:9; I Cor. 5:19-21; Phil. 2:6-7, 3:8-10; Heb. 1:3, chapters 4 and 8; I Peter 2:24
3. John 3:3-5, 6:63, 14:17-26, 15: 26-27, 16:8-11 and 13; Acts 1:8, 4:8-12; Rom. 8:11, 23; I Cor. 2:13, 12:1-11; Gal. 5:22-23.
4. Matt. 20:28; Luke 13:3; Rom. 3:25-26, 6:23, 10:4; II Cor. 7; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 2:17, 9:28; I John 1:9
5. Matt. 10:32-33, 16:18, 28:18; Acts 2:42 & 47, 8:1 & 4; Eph. 4:16-17
6. John 14:3; Acts 1:11, 3:19-20; Phil. 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:16-17
7. Matt. 28:18-19; Matt. 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8

### **B. One in Commitment and in Practice**

1. Deut. 10:4; Matt. 19:16-24, 22:37-40; Rom. 3:9-10, 8:8; Phil. 4:13
2. Gen. 22:1&2, 2; Matt. 10:37-38
3. Ex. 20:14; Matt. 5:28, 31&32, 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18
4. Gen. 1:17, 24-28; Ex. 20:13; Psalm 127:3, 139:13-16; Is. 44:24; Jer. 1:4-5
5. Lev. 18:22-24; Rom. 1:16-32; I Cor. 6:9-20; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10

### **C. One in Responsibility for Spiritual Growth, Worship, Fellowship and Discipline**

1. Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-34; I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:6-13; Heb. 10:25
2. Eph. 4:11-16
3. Matt. 5:23-24, 7:4-5, 18:15; Luke 17:3; I Cor. 5:1-5; II Cor. 7&8; Gal. 6:1; I Tim. 5:20
4. See verses for #1 above

## **II. In Non-Essentials Liberty**

### **A. Liberty in Lesser Doctrine and Practice**

1. I Cor. 1:10-16, 3: verses 4-8 and 21-23
2. I Cor. 10:13; James 1: verses 2 and 3-15, I John 2:1 3. II Cor. 7:9-11; James 4:8-10; I John 1:8-9
4. Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:18; I Peter 1:5; I John 2: 15-16 and 5:4
5. II Sam. 11:27 and 12:14; Psalm 32:3-4, 51: verses 8, 10 and 12; Heb. 12:7-11

### **B. Liberty in Government**

1. I Tim. 3:1-12; Titus 1:5; I Peter 5:1-4

## **III. In All Things Charity**

1. I Cor. 13