



**McDONALD
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

November 2025

McPresby News



**You are invited to
FRIENDSGIVING
Saturday, November 22nd @ 4:00 p.m.
In Trinity Fellowship Hall**

You are invited to join your MPC family for a “friendsgiving” dinner. Bring a side dish or dessert to share with your MPC family. Turkey will be provided. Please come and enjoy the company of your brothers and sisters in Christ as we celebrate the blessings for which we are thankful.

We ask that you RSVP to the church office by Sunday, November 16th, and let us know what you’d like to bring.

HEARTS & HANDS FELLOWSHIP

We have a new group forming, and everyone is invited to attend!

Join us on Tuesday, November 4th at 6pm in Trinity Fellowship Hall for an evening of crafting, prayer, and fellowship. Bring a craft to work on and a snack to share. We are hoping to make this a monthly gathering, and everyone is welcome. If you have any questions, please see Dana Motte or Kerry Schmitt.



QUARTER-LIFE CRISIS

As a congregation we are excited to pray for and encourage our newest Life Group now known as Quarter-Life Crisis. This group is passionate about learning and putting into practice all of the truths of our Lord Jesus Christ. The group meets on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm and is open to all those in the tenth grade through their 20's. These can be some of the most difficult years to follow Jesus but with the right support system, these can actually be incredible years of faith and even leading in the church. Please join us for a great time of study, encouragement, food and fellowship.

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*Give thanks to
the LORD, for he is
good; his love endures for-
ever.*

~ Psalms 107:1



Pastor's Page - A Fresh Look at Some Discredited Writings

I recently was made aware of a new book that is gathering a great deal of attention among theologians in 2025. The book is, *Josephus and Jesus: New Evidence for the One Called Christ*, by T.C. Schmidt. Excitingly, the book has been made available as a free download by a generous donor.

As a brief introduction, Josephus was a great historian who wrote in detail about the history of the first century Jewish people. After the Romans conquered Jerusalem in 70 AD Josephus was hired by Rome to document the history of the Jewish nation during his lifetime and prior. In 93-94 AD he was finishing up this work titled, *Antiquities*. As he was recounting the events in Jewish history around 30 AD he found it appropriate to include a section that mentions and briefly describes “a certain Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man, for he was a doer of incredible deeds...” As you can tell immediately, this is a fantastic claim by someone outside the Christian faith. The quote goes on for a strong paragraph mentioning different attributes of Jesus from a historical perspective.

Here is the fascinating part, for generations now, pastors (including your own) have been told that there is simply no way this section of Josephus is authentic. No one was willing to utilize this text or take it seriously. The text was so discredited that the full section was not even presented to me while I was in seminary. The basic acknowledgment was, yes, for sure, Josephus mentioned Jesus as a historical figure but all the things that he said about him are a later addition by Christian scribes and cannot be trusted. This was virtually the only respected position up until this year.

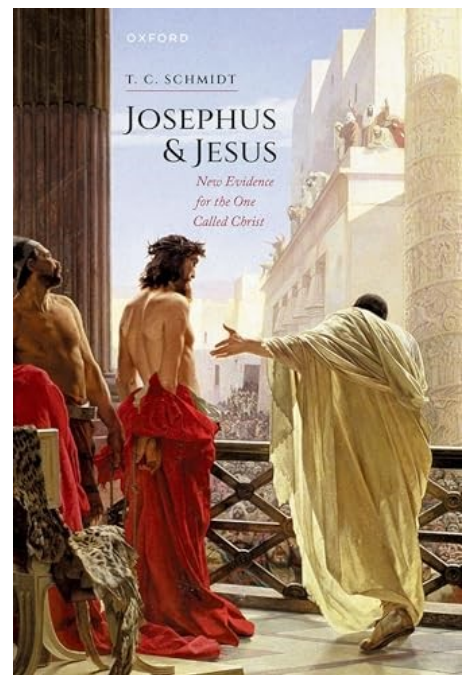
T.C. Schmidt has dedicated ten years of his life to researching this topic and has turned this baseline understanding of Josephus on its head. Here are a few of his most basic claims, 1) Historians have mistakenly read the text as praising Jesus when a proper assembly of the text reveals a neutral to negative bias against him. In other words, Josephus was not praising Jesus but attempting to describe who he was from the perspective of his followers. 2) Josephus includes this statement, “and, when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the accusation of the first men among us.” Schmidt explains that the phrase “first men among us” is a construction that Josephus uses some 50 times in his writings and uses it to refer to key leaders in the Jewish nation that he knew personally, including the various high priests many of whom are mentioned in the New Testament. Josephus is saying that he knew the people who accused this Jesus, condemning him to death and goes on to mention that the followers of Jesus did not disperse after his death and that they believed him to be alive.

Schmidt makes a very compelling argument for the historical reliability of these statements and proves it additionally through a thorough linguistic study of the text in question compared to the rest of Josephus' writings and finds the phrasing and style to be convincingly consistent. Furthermore, Schmidt does a thorough study of the ancient witnesses that quote or comment on this text who strengthen his case for its complete and total historical reliability.

It is difficult to overstate how significant this research is to the early, secular, and historical witness to our Lord Jesus Christ. I encourage each of you to download the resource, at least read the first ten pages and be amazed at what is being uncovered.

With Love and Faith,

Pastor Justin



Announcements



DEACON NEWS

We have enjoyed hosting two hospitality times after church in September and October. Our next hospitality time will be November 16. Upcoming meetings for the Deacons are November 2 and December 7. We were happy to send out care packages to our three graduates who recently headed off to college for their Freshman year! Also, we have celebrated the births of two new babies with visits and a special gift for baby and mom!! We hosted the New Members Luncheon on October 19 at Trinity Center.

Deacons have also been joining Justin in his communion visits this past month.

Our upcoming ministries will be sending encouragement cards to our college students right after Thanksgiving, as they prepare for their finals before Christmas break. Also, we will soon be baking cookies and ordering our poinsettias for our Christmas outreach to those that cannot join us in-person to worship.

Future All-Church events that the Deacons are planning:

- * Movie Night that we will host in January at Trinity Center
- * Souper Bowl Luncheon on Super Bowl Sunday in February to Kick-Off our Soup Sale Fundraiser
- * New Church Directory coming in 2026 as part of our Celebration of 20 Years as McDonald Presbyterian Church!!

Watch for Details on all these events in future newsletters and our weekly bulletins.

If you are interested in the work that the Deacons do and would possibly be considering this as an area of ministry, please contact Syndria Lowe for more information.



SILVER SOULS UPDATE

At our last gathering in August, the group selected to have our next gathering be a celebration of Christmas. Please mark your calendars, Silver Souls, for Wednesday, December 10. The event as always will be held in the Trinity Fellowship Hall and start at 11:30am. This luncheon will be catered and include an "Ugly Christmas Sweater/Shirt" Contest, some Christmas trivia and lots of singing of sacred and secular Christmas Carols. Be watching your mail early/mid November for your Information/RSVP letter with more details. I am so very excited to share this special Christmas luncheon event with all of you!..... Warmly, Syndria



ROSE MANOR OUTREACH

Worship: On Monday, November 17, we will worship together with our beloved residents of Rose Manor at 5:30pm.

Bingo: Wednesday, November 19 at 1:00pm is Bingo Day at Rose Manor.

This year, for Christmas, we would like to make gift bags to brighten the holidays for the residents of Rose Manor. Join us at Hearts & Hands on December 9th when we will be packing the bags. If you have any questions, please see Dana Motte or Kerry Schmitt.



CHRISTMAS DECORATING REMINDER

Since Thanksgiving is late this year, we will be putting up the Christmas decorations on Sunday, November 23rd, following church services. This will be the Sunday before Thanksgiving and generally takes less than an hour. Everyone has done so well with the decorating the past couple of years and we hope you will continue to help us with making our sanctuary beautiful once again for this most holy of sea-



Announcements



TRICK-OR-TREAT OUTREACH

Once again, our Trick or Treat outreach was a great success. Since McDonald Boro adjusted the trick-or-treating schedule this year, we were able to bless more children and families than usual. Someone recently asked “why would a church be involved in Halloween?” The answer is that we are not. We do not hold to the beliefs behind Halloween; however, in order to intentionally love and bless people, you need to meet them where they are. And if that means that we hand out candy to children dressed in costumes and provide a much needed respite and repast on a busy evening, then we certainly don’t want to miss that opportunity. We are fortunate and honored in the ways we can impact our community.

Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything...”

14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 16 ... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.





ALL-CHURCH SHOEBOX PACKING PARTY!



Sunday, NOVEMBER 9, 2025 ~ 9:30am

Calvary Center Fellowship Hall

(No children's Sunday School that day – bring the family & pack shoeboxes!)

**** Packing Party Set up Day ****

Friday, November 7 – 9:00am – Calvary Fellowship Hall

If you are packing shoebox gifts at home, please deliver them to Calvary Center Parlor by or on November 9th or drop them off during National Collection Week (see below).

Please consider including the \$10 suggested donation to defray shipping costs and the printing of gospel materials.

*We also continue
to appreciate
monetary gifts to
cover the
suggested
donation per
shoebox
(\$10/box)*

DON'T FORGET: you can **"Build a Shoebox Online"**

Scan this code to go to our church's goal page:



McDonald Presbyterian Church
(Calvary Center Fellowship Hall)
will again serve as a drop off site for the
shoeboxes. 

**NEW VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS
WELCOME! NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED!**

Mon, Nov. 17: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Mon, Nov. 17: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Tue, Nov. 18: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Wed, Nov. 19: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Wed, Nov. 19: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Thu, Nov. 20: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Fri, Nov. 21: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Sat, Nov. 22: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Sun, Nov. 23: 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Mon, Nov. 24: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

If you are interested in volunteering with any phase of this ministry, please contact
Michelle Unruh (412-720-8232) for more information.

Missions- McFall Fest

THANK YOU to our SPONSORS

Rock, Mulch & More
Robert Gaitens
Ducky's Car Wash
Graff Nation Funeral Home

SPSI
Wagner Tire & Supply, Inc.
Thomas & Little Funeral Home
Coppola Signs & Graphics
O'Connor Insurance Group



Dear Heavenly Father,

We come before You with hearts full of gratitude. Thank You for the blessing of our McFall Fest— a day filled with laughter, joy, community, and Your abundant love.

Lord, we lift up every person who attended. Whether they came with family, friends, or on their own, we pray that they felt welcomed, connected, and uplifted by the spirit of fellowship that surrounded us.

We give special thanks for all the volunteers who gave their time, energy, and hearts to make this event possible. From setting up to serving, guiding, cleaning, and everything in between — their selfless efforts reflected Your love in action. Bless each of them richly for their kindness and dedication.

Thank You for the safety, the smiles, the shared meals, and the memories made. May the seeds of community and faith planted at this festival continue to grow and flourish in the weeks and months to come.

We praise You for being the center of it all — our source of joy, our reason to gather, and the One who brings us together in love.

In Jesus name we pray,

Amen



Community Life Groups

Yahweh

YAHWEH WEDNESDAY: For the fall, our group will be meeting once a month on the first Wednesday of the month. Each session will be a review of a different minor prophet. If you have questions or are interested in joining us, please contact Pastor Justin.

LUNCH LADIES: The Lunch Ladies will meet in Trinity parlor on November 10th and 24th at noon and will conclude our study called Christian by Andy Stanley. All are welcome. Please contact Peggy Samarin or Linda Matchett for information.



LAMPLIGHTERS: In November, the Lamplighters will be concluding their Bible Study of the Sermon on the Mount by LifeGuide by John Stott. We will then be taking a break for the holidays and begin a new study sometime in the new year. We would love for ladies to join us, and please feel free to contact Syndria Lowe or Patty Doane for more information.

SHE SOARS: This year She Soars Life Group will be reading the Bible in a year with the self guided book called A Beautiful Year in the Bible: The 52 Week Bible Study for Women. This book includes weekly Biblical reflection questions and guided prayer. Come join us moms and women every Sunday during the Sunday school hour!



MIGHTY MEN'S BIBLE STUDY: The Mighty Men's Bible study will meet at 9:30am each Sunday in the Calvary Pastor's Study. All men are invited to join us for a cup of coffee and a time studying John's Gospel. "They will be like mighty men . . . because the Lord is with them" (Zech 10:5)

READY, SET, GROW: Ready, Set, Grow meets on Sunday mornings before the worship service. We review the previous week's Scripture portion and sermon points, discussing what we learned and how we applied it to our daily lives. Then, we preview and read the current Sunday's Scripture portion and anticipate what subjects may be taught in today's sermon. We will meet at 9:30am in the Tower Room in Calvary.



QUARTER-LIFE CRISIS: Our newest group is for those in 10th grade through their 20's. See the cover page for more information.



Lunch Ladies Halloween Party



RENEW YOUTH GROUP

ReNew Youth is for students in grades 5-12 and meets on Wednesdays at 6:00pm.

Attention all Veterans! Join Renew youth on 11/12 @ 6-7:45 pm in the Trinity Center Fellowship as we celebrate your service to our great country. Join us for dinner as we serve you and listen to your stories.

No ReNew on 11/26th. Please spend the evening with friends and family!

Every Wednesday includes dinner, rec time, and a lesson.

CLUB 724

Come together on Sunday 11/23 @ Trinity parlor from 5-7:30 pm for FRIENDS-GIVING!! We will provide an entree, and you should bring you absolutely favorite food to share. From popcorn, pizza, to the "sandwich", it doesn't matter what you bring just as long as we come together for fellowship. We will play games and even possibly watch a thanksgiving special!

If you have any questions, please see Erich or Dana Puhlman.

724

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children's Sunday School is available for students in PreK through 12th grade. We meet on Sunday mornings at 9:30am in Trinity Fellowship Hall and then disperse to their classrooms after opening worship time together.

And don't forget: *A continental breakfast is provided every Sunday, starting at 9:20am!*

NOVEMBER ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

November 2= Della Endy & Ella Puhlman

November 9= Jonah Amsler & Selah Amsler

November 16= Julia Amsler & Alyssa Wasco

November 23= Jeanna Manses & Asher Martin



GIVE

Thanks be to God for His
incredible gift! 2 Cor. 9:15

Enter **H**is gates with thanksgiving and
his courts with praise. Psalm 100:4

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Psalm 29:1

And **N**ow we thank you, our God, and
praise your glorious name. 1 Chron. 29:13

Let us **K**neel before the Lord our Maker.
Psalm 95:6

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving,
sing praises to our God. Psalm 147:7

MPC MUSIC ENSEMBLES/ GROUPS

Are you curious about what ensembles/groups we have at MPC? Would you like to join one of them? If you would like more information, please call, text or speak with Heidi or Jeff Betschart about your options. We'd love to have you worship and praise with us through music!



AMPLIFY



Come and "Amplify" your love for Christ through song. You do not have to be a trained singer or instrumentalist to enjoy the evening. Our next "jam session" will be on Tuesday, November 4th at 6:30pm in Calvary sanctuary. If you have any questions or are interested in joining us, please text, call or speak with Heidi or Jeff Betschart.

CHOIR SCHEDULE

Thursday, Nov. 6, 2025

Praise 7:00

Sacred Sounds 7:30

Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025

Praise 7:00

Sacred Sounds 7:30

Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025

Praise 7:00

Sacred Sounds 7:30

Tuesday, Nov. 25, 2025

Praise 7:00

Sacred Sounds 7:30



JUBILANT RINGERS

BELL CHOIR SCHEDULE

All rehearsals begin at 6:00pm

November 13 - Rehearsal

November 20 - Rehearsal

December 4 - Rehearsal

December 11 - Rehearsal

December 18 - Rehearsal

December 21 - Sunday Performance



MUSIC FUN FACT!



This month's music "fun" fact: Scientific research from the University of Oxford found that singing in a group, like a church choir, can improve physical and mental health. Benefits include improved breathing and posture, and it also promotes social bonding.

To find the article online go to

<https://www.ox.ac.uk>

And search for "choir singing improves health"



Calendar

November 2	Ready, Set, Grow Mighty Men Deacon Meeting	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. Noon
November 3	Lamplighters	7:00 p.m.
November 4	Hearts & Hands Fellowship Amplify Quarter Life Crisis	6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.
November 5	Yahweh Wednesday ReNew Youth Group	Noon 6:00 p.m.
November 9	OCC Packing Party	9:30 a.m.
November 10	Lunch Ladies Session Meeting Lamplighters	Noon 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
November 11	Quarter Life Crisis	6:30 p.m.
November 12	ReNew Youth Group	6:00 p.m.
November 16	Ready, Set, Grow Mighty Men Deacon Hospitality	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. Noon
November 17	Rose Manor Worship Lamplighters	5:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
November 18	Quarter Life Crisis	6:30 p.m.
November 19	ReNew Youth Group	6:00 p.m.
November 22	Friendsgiving Dinner	4:00 p.m.
November 23	Ready, Set, Grow Mighty Men Church Decorating Club 724	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. Noon 5-7:30 p.m.
November 24	Lunch Ladies	Noon
November 25	Quarter Life Crisis	6:30 p.m.
November 30	Ready, Set, Grow Mighty Men	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.

FOOD BANK

For the month of November, the Food Bank is requesting *holiday food items* that can be dropped off in Calvary Parlor. They are also accepting cash and check donations. Please make



checks payable to McDonald Presbyterian Church and indicate "Food Bank" on the memo line. Please contact Ed Nalesnick with any questions.

BLESSING BOX

FREE FOOD FOR ANYONE IN NEED.

Our Blessing Box, located outside the church office, is still thriving and blessing many community members.

Some of the more popular items requested are: cereal, breakfast bars, canned meats, peanut butter, jelly, ramen noodles, and side dishes.

If you would like to contribute to this cause, food donations may be dropped off in the church office.

Birthdays, Anniversaries

Robert McDowell	11/1	Tom Maxwell	11/9	Hannah Mohon	11/21
Kara Wockley	11/1	Betty McWreath	11/9	Brian Jeannette	11/21
Ed Semerod	11/1	Pat Powell	11/9	Bob Parkison	11/27
William Wasko	11/2	Jude Cameron	11/11	Lana Longstreth	11/29
Kristie Briceland	11/3	Lois Meehan	11/11		
Diane Shepherd	11/4	Heather Bianchini	11/12		
Nic Speer	11/4	Brayden Jordan	11/12		
Joan Pryor	11/5	Katie Cameron	11/14		
Elsie Koch	11/7	Alicia Slovick	11/14		
Melanie Roths	11/7	Karen Altman	11/15		
Randy Klimas	11/8	Evan Tidd	11/19		
Janet Crawford	11/9	Jennifer Guidice	11/20		



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

Dixie & Gary Haberland 11/9

Joy & Rich Snatchko 11/22



*Our Love &
Prayers Go
Out To...*



Ida Galicic
Strabane Woods- Room 116
319 Wellness Way
Washington, PA 15301

Jon & Patty Sember
Strabane Woods, Room 314
319 Wellness Way
Washington, PA 15301

Larry Doak
H. John Heinz III Progressive Ctr
First Floor South Hall
1010 Delafield Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15215

Laurain Lacotte
Middy Ecker
Elsie Kovach
Clue Barricklow
Rose Manor
100 Rose Court
Oakdale, PA 15071

AT HOME:
Mary Catherine Garrett
Julie Hanzcar
Marlene Shupe
Bob & Vicki Zyra

McDONALD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Non Profit Org.
US POSTAGE PAID
MCDONALD, PA
PERMIT NO. 9

Worship Site:
202 West Lincoln Avenue
McDonald, PA 15057

Office Location:
119 Station Street
McDonald, PA 15057

Phone: (724) 926-8561

Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED



Visit our website:
mcdonaldpres.org

McDonald Presbyterian Church is a mid-sized congregation located in McDonald, PA that exists to honor God by making more disciples for Jesus Christ. Our worship, service and outreach are all focused on helping others experience the love of God and the joy that comes from knowing Him. We love what we do and who we are when we come together as a community of God's people. Our door is always open, and we look forward to meeting you and welcoming you into our fellowship.

Pastor

Dr. Justin Amsler
justin@mcdonaldpres.org
(724) 699-0157

Children's Ministries

Coordinator

Jennifer Lupi
jenniferlupi@mcdonaldpres.org

Interim Coordinators

Erich & Dana Puhlman

Choir Director: *Heidi Betschart*

Assistant Director of Music Ministry

Jeff Betschart

Administrative Assistant

Kerry Schmitt
kerry@mcdonaldpres.org

Bookkeeper: *Dana Myers*
bookkeeper@mcdonaldpres.org

Operations Officer:

Tom Maxwell

Custodial Staff

Bob McDowell
Kerry Schmitt

Newsletter Editor: *Kerry Schmitt*

GET CONNECTED ... BE ENGAGED

WORSHIP

Sundays @ 10:45 a.m. Calvary Center or
live on Facebook

DISCOVER

Join a committee, group, or outreach.

FELLOWSHIP

Join us for Sunday School or join a Life Group.

ACT

Pack a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child.

