



## February 2026 Newsletter

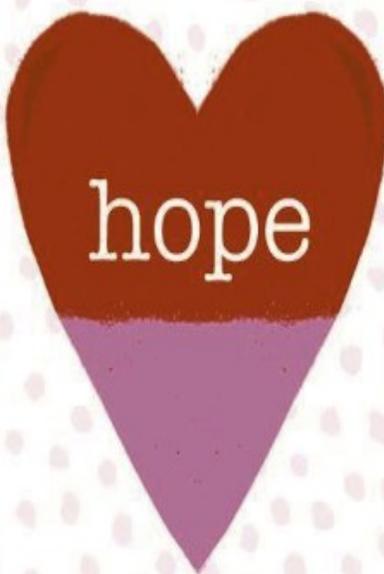
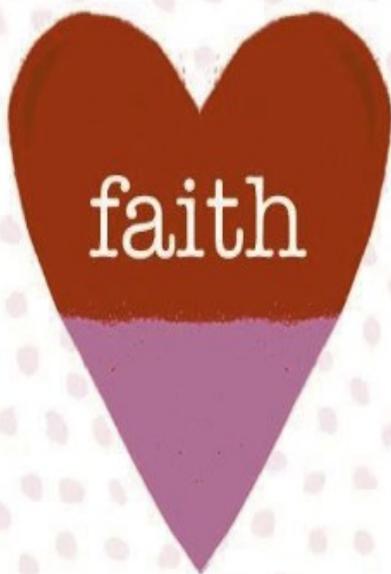
***Our Mission:*** *The Presbytery of Geneva lives to support and equip congregations and leaders to be Christ in the Finger Lakes and the world.*

***Our Vision:*** *Radiating the light of Christ, the Presbytery of Geneva thrives as a community of servants, lifting up every congregation and leader in ministering together.*

The purpose of the newsletter is to announce upcoming events and opportunities sponsored by the Presbytery, its congregations, the Synod of the Northeast, the PC(USA), neighboring presbyteries, and partner agencies. If you have an item for the March newsletter, please send the information to [officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org](mailto:officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org) by **February 23, 2026.**



And now these three remain:



but the greatest of these is love.

# COMMITTEE ON MISSION AND WITNESS

## A Matthew 25 Grant Report

### The Greenhouse at Jodi's Garden Final Report

Submitted by: Stuarts Sammis  
January 5, 2026

This project involved installing a greenhouse on the grounds of the Corning Community Food Pantry (CCFP). CCFP has had a community garden providing fresh organic produce for its clients since 2017. The addition of this greenhouse will enable the garden to be more productive and therefore provide more healthy food for Food Pantry clients. The green house will allow volunteer gardeners to 1) germinate plants from seed (a significant cost savings) and 2) extend the harvest season by at least 6-10 weeks – a 35-60 percent increase in the length of the growing season.

The greenhouse measures approximately 11 1/2 by 24 1/2 feet and sits on a compacted earthen and pea gravel foundation. The greenhouse kit was purchased with special project funds from the CCFP. Additional funding was received from:

First Presbyterian Church of Corning  
Presbytery of Geneva  
Rotary Club of Corning, NY  
Rotary District 7120

Labor for the construction of the greenhouse was donated by Neally Delong.

Pea gravel was donated by Gridley Excavating.

The beds, wiring and other internal equipment/fixtures were built and installed with the assistance of:

Andy Rochester  
David Blouin and sons  
Jay Ricci  
Jeanette Goodwin  
Stephanie Cook  
Stuart Sammis  
Whitney Trifoso

The project took much longer to complete than anticipated due primarily to the inability to hire a company to pour the concrete (took at least 9 months) only to find out that a concrete slab was cost prohibitive. It required over a year to locate an electrician at a reasonable rate to install the power to the building. Then it took an additional ~10 months to get the work done.

Completed project specs vs. original specs

Original	Completed
Greenhouse 11.5' x 24.5'	Greenhouse 11.5' x 24.5'
Base consisting of a concrete slab	Compacted dirt and pea gravel. The cost of a poured concrete slab was prohibitive.
Electrical wiring for 120W and 240W equipment	7 - 120W outlets and 2 - 240W outlets installed. All 120W are GFCI. All outlets are in waterproof cases.

As currently configured, we will be able to extend the growing season by a minimum 3 months.

We are using raised beds for growing. The current layout provides 104 square feet of growing space with an additional 64 square feet available as we expand. We have installed approximately 45 square feet of shelving to be used for storage and seed starting. There are four LED grow lights installed, each containing four lamps. Additionally, we have relocated the grow rack from the Barn to the greenhouse. The grow rack has three shelves with LED grow lights.

Two portable electric heaters and two air circulating fans have been installed.

The only things that we need to add are the ventilation fan which will be done in the Spring and learning how to manage heating. We have taken the first steps in learning how to manage the temperature during cold weather. Currently, we appear to be able to successfully grow to the middle/late November with passive heating. We are now experimenting with how to improve the passive heating while minimizing the need for using the heaters.

All involved in this project express their appreciation for your organization's support.





SYNOD OF THE NORTHEAST  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

## **Innovation Grant Application Webinars Announced**

**02/09/2026 | 10:30 AM | ENGLISH WEBINAR**

Are you interested in applying for the Synod's 2026 Innovation Grant? Whether you have already started a draft application or are just curious about this funding opportunity, we invite you to register for any of the three webinars that will be held in English, Korean, and Spanish.

Through this series of webinars, we seek to:

- offer points concerning the most important information to include to make your application as strong as possible.
- give a tour of our grant portal.
- review the Innovation Grant application; and
- Share a brief synopsis of other Synod funding opportunities.

There will be ample time for attendees to ask questions about draft applications or concepts for future applications. While this webinar will focus most specifically on the Innovation Grant, you are welcome to attend if you are interested in another Synod funding opportunity and would like a general orientation to the Synod's application process.

2026 Innovation Grant – English Translation Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup> 10:30AM

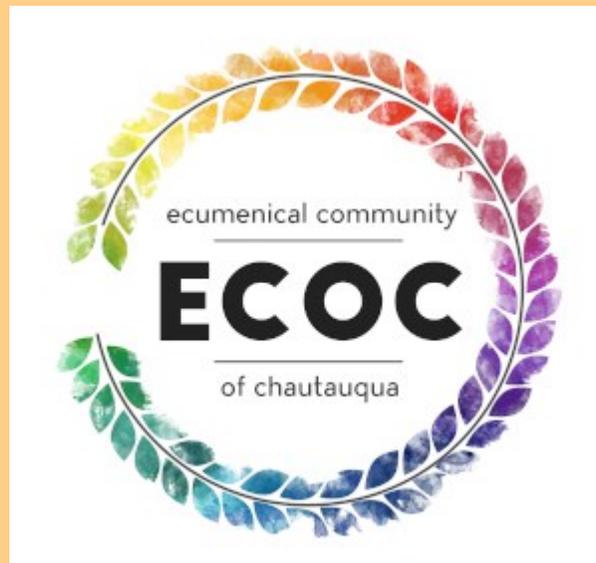
[RSVP](#)

# Upstate NY Presbyteries Event September 25-26, 2026,

# SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars, Presbyterians! You won't want to miss what's coming. September 25-26, 2026 at the Presbyterian Church in Geneva, NY: Six Presbyteries, Andrew Root, Learning, Fellowship, Music, and More!

More details are coming soon, so save the dates and check out the next newsletter for more information.



Did you know that the **Scholarship Committee at ECOC (Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua)** has IOKDS Clergy Renewal Scholarships for the 2026 Chautauqua Institute season providing 1 week of lodging, gate pass and parking during the season. Please [visit their website](#) for more information and forms to apply for the scholarships.

## From the Office of Faith and Nonprofit Development Services:

There will be a free virtual training hosted by Lifespan for faith communities focused on identifying and responding to older adult abuse. This training may be a valuable resource for clergy, faith leaders, and congregations in your counties.

### Training Details:

-  Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2026
-  Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
-  Location: Online via Zoom
- CEU credits available

[REGISTER HERE](#)

*Mark Your Calendar – New Date!*

FEB | 25 | 2026 | 1-3 PM

Integrating Faith Leaders  
into Elder Abuse Services

*Virtual (via Zoom)*

When older adults face abuse or mistreatment, many seek support from their faith communities—places they trust for guidance, comfort, and care. This training equips clergy, lay leaders, and congregants with the tools to recognize signs of elder abuse, understand its impact, and respond with compassion and clarity.

[Register Here](#)

Questions? Ask Rev. Susan M. Frawley – [sfrawley@lifespanrochester.org](mailto:sfrawley@lifespanrochester.org)

**Need help registering?** Ask Emily Rozek at 585-287-6444 or [erozek@lifespanrochester.org](mailto:erozek@lifespanrochester.org)

- ASL interpreting available upon request. We kindly ask that those in need of interpretation register at least one week in advance.
- Contact hours for CEUs are available for LM- and LCSWs. Lifespan of Greater Rochester SW CPE is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #0089.

 **Lifespan**  
*Take it on!*



Burdett Presbyterian Church

# 200TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



CHURCH STREET, BURDETT, NY - THE EARLY YEARS

Bring Your Family, Neighbors and Friends (RSVP please),  
as We Honor the Past and Embrace the Future  
Starting at 2 PM

Free Concert, Buffet & Sharing our Historical Journey

FEB | 14 | 2026

3995 Church St., Burdett, NY  
RSVP 607-546-8560 [dkevanspbc@aol.com](mailto:dkevanspbc@aol.com)  
or text 607-592-9696



# Save the Date!

**03**

**07**

**26**

MONTH

DAY

YEAR

## Congregational Learning Day

### Congregational Learning Day

It's almost here! Congregational Learning Day is right around the corner! Join us on **Saturday, March 7**, for a morning of learning, connection, and inspiration. This year's event will be held on Zoom, so you can stay warm and cozy while taking part in some great classes.

We'll offer Elder and Deacon training, a panel on grants and how to access them, Anti-racism training, and more. The day includes two learning sessions (9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.), with worship in between.

The brochure with class details and registration information is below. We look forward to seeing you there!

Brochure:

Click here to view the brochure and details about the event: <https://bit.ly/49UTh3s>

## Building a Volunteer Team - SUNY Corning Course

# BUILDING & MAINTAINING HIGH-PERFORMING VOLUNTEER TEAMS

WEDNESDAY | MARCH 4  
9AM-12PM | \$120 | VIA ZOOM

### LEARN HOW TO...

- Develop a strategic volunteer program aligned with mission.
- Create volunteer roles, recruitment plans & onboarding processes.
- Train, supervise, & motivate volunteers effectively.
- Manage volunteer performance & conflict.
- Evaluate volunteer impact & continuously improve the program.



**SUNY  
CORNING**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
WORKFORCE

ilearn@corning-cc.edu | 607-936-5501

# Need Officer Training Materials?

check these out at the PCUSA store

<https://www.pcusastore.com/>



# Donate to the Presbytery online!

## Presbytery of Geneva

Search 



### Presbytery of Geneva General Fund

Give now



### Camp Whitman

Give now



### Individual per capita contribution

Give now



### Ordination and Installation Offerings

Give now



### Presbytery Meeting Offerings

Give now

Online Giving for Camp Whitman and the Presbytery of Geneva is available from our website. Make contributions to Camp Whitman, the Presbytery's General Fund, Individual contributions to per capita, Ordination and Installation Offerings, and Presbytery Meeting Offerings. This is through the Presbyterian Foundation and long-time partner, Vanco, so it is very secure to use.

On our homepage [www.presbyteryofgeneva.org](http://www.presbyteryofgeneva.org), click on the "Make a Contribution" link or go directly to our Vanco donation page Donate to Presbytery of Geneva. You can select our general fund, Camp Whitman, per capita, Ordination and Installation Offerings, Presbytery Meeting Offerings, and others in the future as we roll them out.





## Top PC(USA) News *of the Week*



### [Unification Commission approves the majority of a proposed Organization for Mission](#)

The remainder will be addressed during an online UC meeting Feb. 12



### [Where coffee opened the door to community](#)

Kentucky church opens cafe to further ministry



### [Palestinians at a large refugee camp share their stories and their delectables with the PC\(USA\) delegation](#)

Jordan's Gaza Camp, also known as Jerash Camp, is home to 40,000 refugees



### [From the archives: Art is for everyone](#)

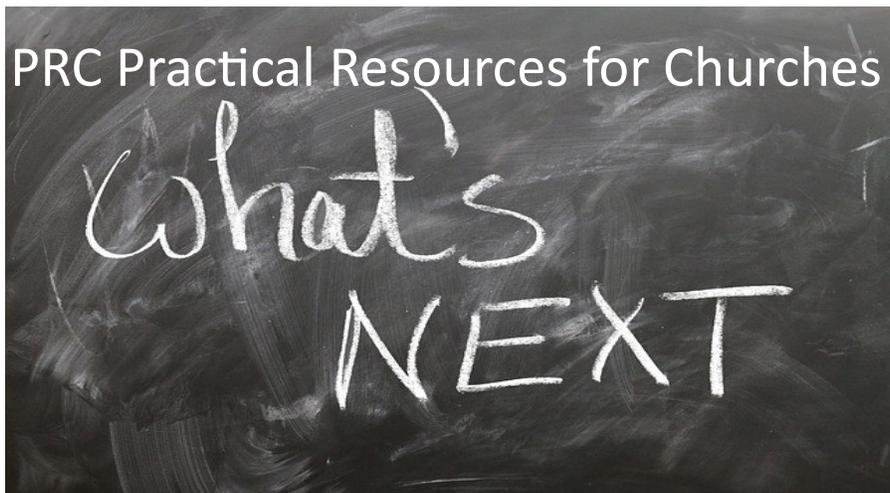
Need a new hobby for the new year? Find inspiration in the Presbyterian Historical Society archives



### [Generating a love that's more fierce than the harms that confront us](#)

The Rev. Paul Roberts delivers a memorable opening plenary during APCE's Annual Event





### PRC's 2026 Online events

All webinars are recorded. Click the title to register or read the description.

#### [Guests have arrived at church!! Will I ever see them again?](#)

**Thursday, February 5, 2026 \* New Date \***

**2:00 – 3:00 PM EST**

**Leader – Ken Kroohs**

#### [Resisting Erasure and Isolation as Pathway to Belonging](#)

**Thursday, January 29, 2026**

**2:00 – 3:00 PM EST**

**Leaders - Craig Lemming, Erin Weber-Johnson**

#### [Using Artificial Intelligence to Create Stewardship Campaigns](#)

**Tuesday, February 3, 2026**

**2:00 – 3:00 PM EST**

**Leader - Charlie Kuchenbrod**

#### [5 Steps to Help Your Church Be Friendlier to Guests](#)

**Tuesday, February 10, 2026**

**2:00 – 3:00 PM EST**

**Leader – Karl Vaters**

#### **HANDS TO WORK, HEARTS TO GOD CRAFT GROUP**

Come join our virtual HANDS TO WORK, HEARTS TO GOD CRAFT GROUP where we share our love of crafting and desire to connect with God online. We meet every month on the third Thursday from 7 to 8 pm. Bring whatever "lap work" you may have and while we craft, we will listen to and discuss readings from Joyce Rupp's book, *Constant Hope*.

If interested, please call or email Karen Smith at PRC

Phone: 631-821-2255

Email: [karen@prcli.org](mailto:karen@prcli.org)

## Garrett Seminary launches digital resource library for churches

Garrett Collective especially benefits rural churches with free and low-cost worship and theological offerings



Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary

There's a stereotype about rural churches - that folks who worship there aren't open to new perspectives, that they won't engage diverse theologies or biblical scholarship. Anyone who's lived and worked in those communities knows this simply isn't true.

Sure, there may be challenges in translating materials to address those churches' particular needs and lived experiences, but that's true of any worshipping community. And it's true that those communities may have fewer queer folks, that their congregation may be whiter, but people still engage in the same discernment about how to best love their neighbors and live a virtuous life, questions raised by theologians who labor on the margins are also ones they're asking.

What is true is that rural congregations are significantly less likely to be exposed to a wide range of theological resources. Given their typically small budgets, they're less likely to bring in a subject-matter expert, or to purchase often-pricey Christian education curriculums. As a result, many churches don't feature diverse perspectives, but that's often a function of access, not interest. To change the religious landscape, we must broaden the theological waters.

For the past five years, I've lived in coastal Maine and have brought queer theology sermons and trainings into more than two dozen churches across the state. I'm on the board of OUTMaine, the largest service provider for queer youth in the state, and we frequently receive requests from churches for someone to preach, guide Bible studies, and answer basic questions about LGBTQIA+ people. Many of these congregations are in towns with less than 1,000 people, but a hunger to know more and do better is not determined by a community's population. From fishing villages on the Canadian border to industrial rust belt towns that dot the state's interior, I've brought unabashedly progressive queer theology - delivered in a spirit of love and understanding - and watched communities wrestle with these truths.

One representative congregation invited me to lead Bible studies as they discerned whether to become an open affirming congregation; the community was evenly split. Many of the folks who struggled with this choice did so because they believed the Bible expressly forbade homosexuality and expansive gender identities.

I led two Bible studies: The first engaged so-called "texts of terror," offering different interpretations of those habitually misunderstood passages. The second offered a queer reading of the Joseph text, inviting congregants to experience how queer people are present in the Bible and ways LGBTQIA+ people have found ourselves in its pages.



The Rev. Benjamin Perry teaches at a congregation in Maine. Perry is also Director of Communications at Garrett Seminary (photo courtesy of Benjamin Perry)

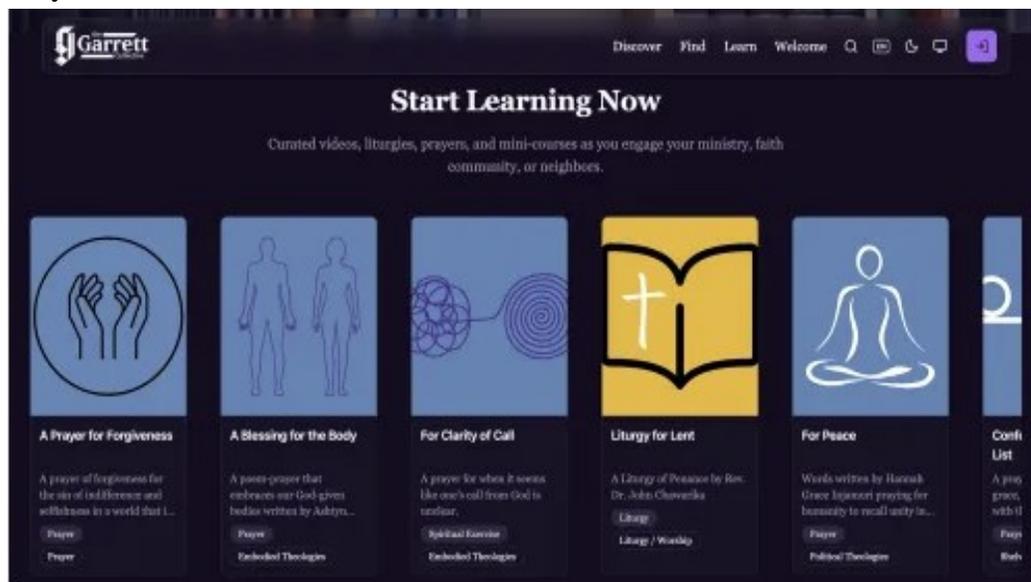
Our conversation was rich; tender reflections from queer congregants swirled alongside honest confessions from people who still struggled to move beyond the theologies they'd long held. But we held each other together in dialogue, opening space for the Holy Spirit to move through our midst. Last fall, the seeds we planted blossomed: The congregation voted unanimously to become an open and affirming church.

I share this anecdote not because this community is unique but because they are typical. Many rural churches contain myriad perspectives, and a palpable yearning for ways to know God that knit love across difference. Cis heterosexual elders want better ways to understand and interact with queer grandchildren. People are hungry to move beyond the polarization and alienation that afflict public conversation.

But to nurture growth in ways that are honest, compassionate, and wise instead of ones that are rooted in shame, we need different stories - we must bring the revolutionary biblical scholarship that liberated my own moral imagination into forms that are accessible to laypeople. And what is somewhat unique about the congregation I serve is that they have ready access to an experienced queer theologian and facilitator who happens to live nearby, and who will work for a fraction of my normal speaking fee because I believe in this ministry. That's not a service many churches can expect.

That's why I'm so excited about Garrett Seminary's new online platform, The Garrett Collective. A digital library of free and low-cost theological resources, the Collective offers videos, prayer, liturgies, Bible Studies, and more, created by dozens of ministers, scholars, and subject-matter experts. The resources are housed in a beautiful, Netflix-style display and can be downloaded onto a device so people can access them offline - especially useful in rural parts of the U.S. where internet can be limited. More than just static resources, the Collective also has classes and cohorts where people can study and engage these materials alongside other Christians.

As Garrett's Director of Communications, I've had a front-row seat to watch the incredible passion our development team has poured into this platform and even contributed a few resources of my own. It's a stunning gift, one that holds the potential to bridge the gap between the theological academy and the kinds of communities I serve.



Resources offered on the home page of the new Garrett Collective.

kinds of churches I'm describing - ones for whom access is a higher barrier than ideology - better theological tools can spark meaningful conversation that leads to change. And it's a gift to rural clergy, who often shoulder incredible demands on their time and energy, with far fewer resources than their peers enjoy.

When all of us come together, we can better nurture people who are often treated as an afterthought or punchline, but who deserve the same robust theologies that helped other folks expand how we think about God and neighbor. The good news is meant for all.

So many panicked words have been written and spoken about rural Christianity, especially from progressive clergy and denominations who lament the ways our national politics have produced poisonous theologies, but who often don't have relationships with rural churches. I'm under no delusion that a new online platform will magically mend our cultural fractures, nor that every church who might benefit will engage more liberative theology. But for the



## First Presbyterian Church & Society of Seneca Falls

23 Cayuga Street, Seneca Falls, New York 13148

315-568-6636

[www.fpressf.com](http://www.fpressf.com)

Reverend Dr Leah Ntuala, Pastor  
Reverend Dr Peter J Crego, Pastor Emeritus

January 24, 2026

Dear Fellow Members of the Presbytery of Geneva,

We hope this letter finds you in good health. As colleagues in ministry, we wanted to invite you to an exciting opportunity that can magnify the impact of your generosity to the Mission Funds of the Presbytery of Geneva.

It is an essential part of our collective ministry and call from God to be the hands and feet of Jesus's love in the Finger Lakes. In this light, the First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls is donating \$2000 to begin a Mission Endowment Fund for the Presbytery. This is to be an investment fund with the Foundation, Fidelity, Vanguard, or wherever it decides. This is not to be placed in a general savings account in a bank, but in an account where it can accrue interest and grow for decades to come.

Our hope and prayer are that other churches will donate to this fund, in addition to their Mission Pledge, to ensure Mission dollars will always be present to help God's people on behalf of the Presbytery. Please prayerfully discern this with your congregations, any amount would be beneficial.

Thank you for your continued generosity. Together we shine the Christ.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Leah



E-mail: [firstpres13148@gmail.com](mailto:firstpres13148@gmail.com) Web address: [fpressf.com](http://fpressf.com)



# M.A.L.T. Transitional Ministry Education

The Mid America/Lincoln Trails (MALT) "Art of Transitional Ministry" training is not limited to those presently engaged in or inquiring about transitional ministry. Anyone interested in learning how to walk through change alongside your church is invited to join in.

## Training

Basic Transitional Ministry Education consists of 60 contact hours plus a practicum that combines reflection on, and experience in, some aspect of interim/transitional ministry.

- Week I - Introduction to Transitional Ministry
- Week II - The Practice of Transitional Ministry

Participants must complete Week I and all practicum assignments before taking part in Week II.



**April 27, 2026**

3PM Check-In

**May 1, 2026**

12PM Conclusion



**Mercy Conference  
& Retreat Center**

2039 N. Geyer Road

St. Louis, Missouri 63131



**Program Fee \$1,100**

Includes room and meals



**Register today at**

[synodma.org/registration](https://synodma.org/registration)

## Faculty

**Rev. Dr. Deborah Boucher-Payne**

Executive, Synod of Mid-America

**Rev. Dr. Tassie Green**

Team Leader

**Rev. Laura Sherwood**

**Rev. Mason Todd**

**Rev. Dr. Barbara Wilson**



## 2026 Mileage Rate Increased to 72.5 cents per mile

The IRS has set the 2026 mileage rate as 72.5 cents per mile, which is up 2 cents from last year. If you are doing any reimbursements for your church members, Presbytery committee members, pulpit supply, or moderator supply, please be aware of the change. Here is the information from the IRS website.

<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-sets-2026-business-standard-mileage-rate-at-725-cents-per-mile-up-25-cents>

Looking for old records?  
Need to archive your  
church's records?  
Contact the:

### Presbyterian Historical Society

425 Lombard St.

Philadelphia, PA 19147

Ph: (215) 627-1852

Email: [refdesk@history.pcusa.org](mailto:refdesk@history.pcusa.org)



## Share Your PHOTOS



New  
email  
address?



New staff  
or session  
member?



Upcoming Event?

## Please share!

If your church has photos of recent events, has news of an upcoming event, or some updated information to share, please email the presbytery office at:

[officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org](mailto:officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org)