

FROM PASTOR TAD

Great (Faith) Pumpkins



One of my favorite things to do in October is watch *It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown*. Besides being a fun Halloween TV special, the show teaches us a lesson about living in faith when we are disappointed. I do not know whether Charles M. Schulz intended for the Peanuts Halloween special to teach lessons of faith, but it is known that Mr. Schulz was a Sunday School teacher and addressed faith issues in the Peanuts comic strip and in other Peanuts television shows.

Whenever I watch *It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown* I'm taken with Linus and his quest to witness the Great Pumpkin rising on Halloween night. According to Linus, the Great Pumpkin rises from only the sincerest pumpkin patch. Throughout the show, Linus is convinced that he has found the most sincere patch anywhere. "Not an ounce of hypocrisy as far as the eye can see" he tells Sally. By the end of the show the only person Linus and Sally see in their pumpkin patch is Snoopy. The show closes with Linus berating Charlie Brown for calling his night in the pumpkin patch stupid and vowing that next year he will find the pumpkin patch that is truly sincere.

Linus has a strong, undeniable faith in the Great Pumpkin. Throughout the show, others scoff, ridicule, and tease him for believing, but Linus stands firm. We who place our hope in a real Savior, should take note of Linus's steadfastness. On the other hand, we should not overlook the anxiety undergirding Linus's faith. We see it in his obsession over finding the sincerest pumpkin patch, being convinced that the Great Pumpkin shuns anything with even a hint of hypocrisy. The anxiety Linus suffers over this issue is plain to see, even when Linus is still sure he has found the right place. When Linus is ultimately disappointed, his response is to double-down on his devotion to the point of unhealthy obsession. As the closing credits role, his rant to Charlie Brown borders on the unhinged.

For us who follow Jesus, this story begs a question: What motivates our faith? Is our faith driven by anxiety, fear of making God angry? When we find ourselves feeling anxious about whether we are "good enough" or if we are "living up to God's kingdom ethics" - i.e., when we are tempted to be like Linus, it is well for us to remember that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and all its demands. As the writer of Hebrews reminds us, we have a great high priest who sympathizes with us because he too was tested in every way... yet without sin (Hebrews 4-5). The driving force for our faith should not be anxiety. When our prayers are not answered the way we want, we should not wonder what is wrong with us that God should deny us love or want to punish us. Instead, let us be driven by a desire for closeness and by gratitude.

Worrying if the pumpkin patch of our heart is sincere enough for Jesus to make his home is needless. It does not matter how pure our heart is. All we need to do is be sincere enough to genuinely want Jesus. That's all Jesus needs to move in. If Jesus has already moved in and we are sorry for what little space he has, that indicates we are ready for the greater project of making our hearts more hospitable to Jesus. We give more of our lives to Jesus not by guilt, but by trust. We grow when we experience His grace. When we see Jesus' faithfulness, when the weight we place on Jesus holds up, we find that we can trust a little more. When we string a number of small increases in trust together they add up to a changed life and a deeper faith.

Views From a Hill



7 Bite-Sized Ways to Grow Closer to Christ This Month

We live in an age of information overload, so this article is about bite-sized ways you can grow spiritually. Integrating one or two of these into your routine will lead to large portions of spiritual growth over time.

1. Stand on Solid Ground Before Your Feet Start Walking

The moment your feet hit the floor each morning, pray something like: "Lord, You are my firm foundation. Today, I build my life on You." Say it before your phone, before your coffee, before the day gets away from you. You're not asking God to bless your plans — you're anchoring yourself before you make any.

2. Let the Sink Become an Altar

Every time you wash your hands this month, whisper: "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

3. Ask God Two Honest Questions Each Night

Before you close your eyes, ask: 1 - Where did I experience an abundance of Your love and grace today? 2 - Where did I sense a lack of it? No journal or judgement required — just an honest minute with God about your actual day.

4. Pass a Verse Around

Text a few people and start a verse-of-the-week thread. Rotate who picks it each week. Read it, sit with it, then share one line about what caught your attention. A whole week of Scripture, carried by a group instead of just you — and a reason to text about something other than where you're going.

5. Find Your People

Growth was never meant to happen alone. We currently have fifteen small groups and Bible studies at Falling Spring — there's likely one that fits your schedule and stage of life. Take two minutes and browse the full list at pcfallingspring.org/adults. Growing together beats going it alone.

6. Red Light Reset

When waiting at a red light, take a deep breath and pray: (inhale) "Be still," (exhale) "and know You are God." You have just turned a delay into a moment of grace.

7. Order Your Day Before You Open It

Before you open your laptop or step into your first task of the day, pray this: "Lord, please order my day." Simple enough to pray even on the mornings you're already running late.

One last word: You don't need all seven. Pick the one that's easiest to start tomorrow, and let that be enough for now. Small, faithful, repeated — that's how we grow.

Much love,

Brad

October Worship Schedule:



Oct. 4 — World Communion Sunday - One service, 10:00 AM, Family Life Center

Christians around the world share the Lord's Supper together on this day, reminding us that we belong to one Church that spans every nation and culture. Scripture: Isaiah 10:1-4, 11:1-9 — *Shared Guilt and Shared Salvation*: We share in the guilt of our neighbors and culture, but Jesus, the shoot from Jesse's stump, gives us hope through His righteousness and resurrection life. Preaching: Pastor Tad

Oct. 11

Scripture: Isaiah 52:14–53:9 — *The Damage of Sin*: God shows us the ugliness of sin not to shame us, but so we're grateful that Jesus took it to the cross and gave us a new self. Preaching: Pastor Tad (Chapel & Sanctuary); Brad (Family Life Center)

Oct. 18

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-9 — *Truth of the Human Condition*: Though we keep striving our own way, God still loves us and makes us new when we let the Holy Spirit guide us. Preaching: Pastor Tad (Chapel & Sanctuary); Brad (Family Life Center)

Oct. 18, 4:00 PM in the Family Life Center — Pastor Tad's Installation Service

Join us as we celebrate this new season of Pastor Tad's ministry at Falling Spring.

Oct. 25

Scripture: Isaiah 58:1-9 — *False vs. Genuine Worship*: God values passionate serving over passionate singing — when we love and serve, we become a light that draws others in. Preaching: Pastor Tad (all three services)

October Alpha Schedule

October 7: No Alpha or Midweek during the Homecoming parade. Let's gather and have some fun cheering on the parade at the Northeast corner of McKinley and 7th St. The parade begins at 6 PM.

October 14: Why and how should I read the Bible?

October 21: How does God guide us?

October 24: Saturday sessions on the Holy Spirit:

- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- What does the Holy Spirit do?
- How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?

October 28: How can I resist evil?



Falling Spring Youth

The youth leaders continue doing an outstanding job connecting with students both at church and out in the community, providing regular opportunities for fun, friendship, and spiritual growth. Here's what's happening in October:



Wackies on Wednesdays

Oct. 7 — No Wackies during the Homecoming Parade. If you're not in the parade, feel free to meet at the corner of 7th & McKinley to cheer on the parade!

Oct. 14, 21 & 28 — Wackies from 6:30–8:00 p.m. We're looking at the parables of Jesus this month.



Sunday Morning Bible Study

9:00–9:50 a.m. in rooms 211–212.
We're currently studying the book of Acts.



5th Quarter Parties

Held after home CASHS football games — check with your youth leaders for dates and locations.



High School Girls' Bible Study

Meets Sunday afternoons and evenings. Interested? Talk to Abby Bucher, Tracy Lombardozzi, or Elise Wright.



Guys' Open Gyms

Reach out to Cade Brindle, Colton Wright, Nate Widmann, or Hunter Brindle for details.



Looking Ahead

Plans are already underway for Camp Falling Spring 2027, scheduled for July 11–16.

Mark your calendars!



KIDS' MINISTRY

Email: pcfskids@pcfallingspring.org

OCTOBER

PHOTO HIGHLIGHT



Fun Fest



J-Walkers: The Good Samaritan



WHAT WE'RE LEARNING



Sunday School

Our Bible buddy, Beacon the rainbow-billed toucan, will help us learn about some important events in the life of Jesus. On mission Sunday at the end of the month we will make items to put in OCC shoeboxes.



Joyful Voices

We will begin learning some songs that we will share with the congregation later this fall. We will also have fun learning a song with boom whackers.



J-Walkers & Tweens

J-Walkers and Tweens will follow the same lesson every week, but it will be modified to fit each age group. They will be learning stories and people from the Bible. During October we will be focusing on prayer. We will practice looking verses up in the Bible and learn a different memory verse every month. And of course, there will be lots of interactive games and activities!



A NOTE FROM MISS JENN

It's my favorite time of year, fall! The air is cooler and the leaves are showing off their beautiful colors. There are lots of great activities happening at PCFS this fall, including a fall block party on Nov. 7! We hope you'll join us.

-Jenn Smith, Children's Ministry Director

Sunday School

Age 4 - Grade 5
Room 101 & 103
9-9:50

J-Walkers

Age 4 - Grade 2
Room 101
6:30-7:30

Tweens

Grade 3 - Grade 5
Room 103
6:30-7:30

Joyful Voices

Age 4 - Grade 5
Room 101
7:30-8

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

Give your burdens
to the Lord, and
He will take care
of you.

-Psalm 55:22



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Oct. 14

Mid-Week
Activities
6:30-8

Oct. 21

Mid-Week
Activities
6:30-8

Oct. 23

Family Open
Gym Time
10-12

Oct. 28

Mid-Week
Activities
6:30-8

Save the
date!

Nov. 7

Fall Block Party
3pm-5pm

Sunday School every
Sunday from 9-9:50

Mid-week activities are J-Walkers, Tweens, & Joyful Voices

News from Presbyterian Women



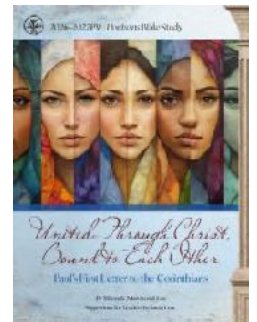
Women's Thank Offering Service

November 8th is the date for the 2026 annual service. This year's theme is "*Loving in Deed and Truth*," taken from 1 John 3:18. Since 1888 this offering has been collected in women's groups and churches as a thank offering to the Lord. Nine projects have been selected in 2026 of which 40 per cent are related to health ministries. More information will be shared in the Minute-for-Mission and the bulletin covers.



Come join the Horizons' Bible study

The 2026–2027 PW/Horizons Bible study will meet next on **Monday, October 19 at 9:00 AM in Room 205**. The group meets the second Monday of each month September through May and uses a DVD and supplemental materials for the study. Contact Sue Mummert if you wish to join this study so we can order your study book.



United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians by Rhonda Mawhood Lee and Suggestions for Leaders by Sarah Leer.



No Sale of Happy Valley Soups to be held in 2026.

We will consider a sale for 2027. There are other local organizations who will offer these soups this fall. See Sue Mummert or Linda Fisher for additional information about those sales.

Prayer Shawl Ministry



This ministry continues to bring blessings for both those who create the shawls or lap robes and for those who receive them. We are always looking for more women to participate in this mission. PW will provide the yarn if you provide the skill, time and prayers to create these in your home as you have time. Even if you don't knit or crochet, you can be part of this ministry through your monetary donation so that we may purchase more yarn. Talk with any of the Coordinating Team members about the sizes and shapes of the shawls and lap robes.

New faces always welcome in our mission and service.

We are always looking for women to join us in our missions. The members of the Coordinating Team are Linda Fisher, Sue Mummert, Karen Stover, Marilyn Griffin, Pat Phenicie-Grandel, Becky Fritz, Vicki Kaye, Wanda Hutchings, Judy George, Lorraine Schwartz, and Joy Zimmerman.





October Food Pantry Update

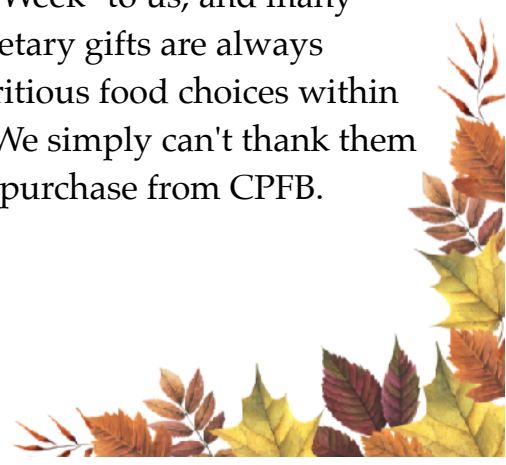
The Central PA Food Bank, located in Harrisburg, delivers food products to our Pantry each month. We place our order online from a list of approximately 100 food items that vary in price, type, and availability. For example, canned corn is almost always available, while items like canned beets or mandarin oranges are more of a treat when we can get them. We regularly order protein selections from the Food Bank when available — ground chuck, ham steaks, chicken parts, and tilapia pieces.

Ordering from the CPFEB takes some patience and a bit of a learning curve! Orders must be placed online five business days before delivery, and each delivery must weigh at least 800 lbs — ours actually average 2,500 lbs! The items pictured online aren't always exactly what arrives, and since many items aren't pictured at all, package sizes can be a fun surprise. Some items we're hoping for, like rice or egg noodles, aren't always available, while other treats we try to use in moderation tend to show up more often. Prices shift regularly, and delivery can arrive anytime between 7 am and 1 pm — sometimes right in the middle of our own Food Pantry distribution hours, which keeps us on our toes! Ordering is definitely a learned skill, and I'm grateful for the patient guidance Alice Hyatt has offered.

Fortunately, we have a wonderful arrangement with Weis Markets that helps us round out our offerings with items like pasta, oatmeal, and pork & beans. Sue Reynolds makes a weekly run to Weis for anything we couldn't get through CPFEB. On a monthly basis, Jane Morgan picks up 20 cases of toilet paper from BJ's. Bill Meyers brings in 40 half gallons of milk weekly from Aldi's. Vicki Kaye selects around 30 varieties of boxed cereal each week. Karen Shoemaker shops for butter, and Kim Baker & Sue Mader generously donate eggs. Our parishioners — especially Beth Francisco and Sue Laub — share fresh garden produce in season, and Mike & Rosemary Smith pick up donated baked goods from Ada's Bakery and donuts (sometimes 20 boxes!) from Dunkin Donuts. It truly is a full team effort keeping our shelves stocked, and we're grateful for every hand that helps!

Thank you to all of our PCFS family who donate the "Food of the Week" to us, and many thanks to everyone who sends donations our way. Food and monetary gifts are always welcome and needed. We're committed to providing healthy, nutritious food choices within our budget, and our volunteers understand this mission so well. We simply can't thank them enough for all the ways they help supplement what we're able to purchase from CPFEB.

Marty Walker, Coordinator



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



Have you heard?!?! Falling Spring Presbyterian Church is now an **Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Drop Off Location!** This means that other churches and people in the community can drop off their packed shoebox gifts during **National Collection Week November 16-23**. We will count them, pack them into larger cartons, and then deliver them to another collection center where they will continue the distribution process. The shoeboxes will all be distributed to children around the world by Samaritan's Purse Ministries. Volunteers are needed during National Collection Week to help make the drop off process go smoothly. Please use the QR code or link below to sign up to help.

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050C4FA4AB28A1FE3-66037609-occdrop>

PACKING PARTY

When: **November 1** after the 10am services

Where: FLC Room 107 & 108

No party is complete without food: Pizza, Salad and Desserts will be provided.

Please RSVP using the QR Code to the left so we can order the correct amount of pizza.



Donations Needed

We especially need:

- Small stuffed animals
- Small toys, games, playing cards and jacks
- School supplies, including pencils, sharpeners, pencil pouches, drawstring backpacks, tablets and solar calculators
- Hats, gloves, scarves, T-shirts and bandanas
- Hygiene items such as combs, brushes, hair accessories, toothbrushes, nail clippers and files (non-liquid; no toothpaste or soap)
- Soccer balls and pumps, bouncy balls and small footballs

Donation bins are located in the FLC, back of the Sanctuary, and church office.

AMAZON WISH LIST

Shop our PCFS OCC Amazon **Wish List** by scanning the QR code. Items will be used for our November 1 packing party.



SHOEBOX SUPPLY HOUSE

Great OCC deals are available locally at:
709 Marden Ave.

Shippensburg, PA 17257

Visit the Shoebox Supply House website for hours and information,
<https://shooboxsupplyhouse.com>.

Thanks for your continued support of OCC. Together, we can **pack, pray, give, welcome, and serve**—all in the name of Jesus!

Questions?

Contact Pam Bucher 717-860-6776

psbucher3@gmail.com