

Brentwood Presbyterian Church Newsletter



September 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept 6** - Last day of Summer Hours
Sept 7 - Labor Day
Sept 8 - SHIM Program begins
Sept 13 - Resume Regular Worship Hours - 11:00 am
- Sunday School 10:00 am, teens and adults
- Fellowship Hour 10:00 am
- Practice Congregational Meeting On-line
Sept 20 - Malawi Lunch
- Congregational Meeting
Sept 22 - Sept 28 - Rev. Kanaski on vacation
Sept 27 - Rev. Ken D'Alessandro filling the pulpit
Oct 4 - World Wide Communion

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Congregational Meeting

Following worship on
September 20, 2026
Please plan to attend
More info on pg. 7

Contact the Pastor

Cell phone:

(520) 390-2854

Email:

akanaski@pts.edu

Office hours: 10am - 2pm
every Thursday or contact her to
set up another time to meet.

Day off Tuesday



Pastor's Letter

An Update on our Call Process

Last month we learned that Baldwin Presbyterian Church voted that they no longer wanted to partner with us to look for a pastor. Session has since received guidance from Pittsburgh Presbytery on next steps. Session has decided to move forward with hiring a full-time installed pastor—that is, a pastor who is called by the congregation and planning to stay long-term, like Dr. Barker was, rather than someone with a year-to-year contract like me. Our new partnership with SHIM gives us a lot more financial resources, and a full-time pastor will have more time to work with you all to grow the church.

There are several steps to complete before we can enter the part of the process where our application is out in the world and we're interviewing candidates. We need to:

1. get a nominating committee together so that
2. we can elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) so that
3. the PNC can get our paperwork edited and written, work with the congregation to get the information they need about what you're looking for in a pastor, and then begin interviewing candidates.

Before I go into the specifics of what exactly that will look like, I want to pause. I know that's a lot of steps. I know we've been in this process for years now. I know it's frustrating that things didn't work out with Baldwin, and now we're restarting the process again. I know. And—all of that is normal. The process of hiring a pastor is a long and often winding one, as the process of discerning where God is leading so often is. Sometimes that process involves starts and stops and turning around. That does not mean we have failed. That does not mean God has abandoned us. That does not mean your previous work is wasted. Twists and turns and surprises and setbacks are all a normal part of finding where God is leading. God goes with us through it all, leading and correcting as needed, and nothing is wasted with God.

i know this from personal experience: When I was first searching for a call, I spent a year working crappy jobs and living in a crappy apartment, interviewing desperately and overwhelmed by it all. I know this process can suck, and take longer than we want, and be so incredibly frustrating. And also, in that time of waiting, I learned all sorts of things about myself and about God. I learned how not to be in school, something I had not done since I was four years old; I learned of God's faithfulness; I learned how to serve God where I was, even when it wasn't where I wanted to be. At the end of that time of waiting, I was the pastor of a church that was a great fit and a church where we did great ministry together. And that time of waiting had prepared me to be a better pastor.

As you read through the next steps below, please know that the purpose of all of it is to get Brentwood into the best possible position to find a pastor who is a great fit for you and what you need from your next permanent pastor.

Okay, let's get into specifics:

Our first next step is to get the nominating committee functioning again. There are currently no members of the nominating committee, and we need a nominating committee to form the Pastor Nominating Committee. To form our nominating committee, we will have a congregational meeting on September 20, 2026. For more information about that meeting, please see the full announcement on page 7 of this newsletter.

Next we need to elect the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The nominating committee will nominate five members who are as representative of the congregation's diversity as possible (age, involvement, how long people have been members, etc.). Once a potential PNC has been chosen, we will have another congregational meeting to elect them. We will let you know of the date as soon as we can.

Then the PNC will do the work of listening to the congregation, discerning what sort of pastor you're looking for, and writing an application.

I know this is a lot of work. I know we've already done some parts of the process. We are doing this work, and repeating parts of it, for two reasons. First, hiring a full-time inspired pastor is a very different process than hiring a part-time covenanted pastor. Some of the previous committee's work will carry over, but some of it will need to be considered anew. Second, the church is in a very different place than it was two years ago. The partnership with SHIM is the obvious example, but session and I have also been doing a lot of process and procedure work behind the scenes. You also hired me to be your interim pastor, and that was not true two years ago. We are working to move the church in a better and healthier direction, and that will matter to pastors who are interested in being your permanent pastor.

As we get closer to these meetings, a few things to keep in mind:

If you are approached by Bob, myself, or a member of the nominating committee to be a part of the nominating committee or the PNC, please prayerfully consider if that is a way you are called to serve the church right now. (If it's not, then thank you very much for your consideration and the other ways you have served and are serving the church!) If you're interested and haven't been approached, feel free to approach us or nominate yourself at either congregational meeting.

We are starting over in enough ways here that we will be forming an all new committee. Thank you to Pat & Deb Campbell, Lyn Sokol, Tom & Colleen Crowder, Cheryl March, Marla Moore and Debbie Sheehan for their work on previous committees that have been part of the call process for your energy, dedication, discernment, and time spent serving the church and moving this process forward.

As we work through this process, please continue to pray: for Brentwood Presbyterian, for your session members, for the future members of the nominating committee and PNC, and for this entire call process.

I know waiting sucks. I know you want to get to the part where you have a permanent pastor that you love. But sometimes God's timing is not our timing. Sometimes there is still something to learn in the waiting. Sometimes we're going in the wrong direction. Always, always, though, God is with us in the waiting. The question, then, is where God is in the waiting and where God is leading us next.

I can't wait to find out with you.

Blessings,
Alina

WELCOME TO SHIM AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

BPC has contracted with SHIM to utilize space in our building for an after school program for middle/highschool age youth, primarily from BWSD, but a few other districts as well. They will be on site Monday - Thursday 3:30 to 8:00 pm and Friday 3:30 to 6:00 pm and utilizing 3 rooms on the 1st floor and 2 rooms on the main floor. The focus of their program is on homework help, building life skills and relationships. SHIM staff will be here to supervise all activities and provide transportation for participants. SHIM will be moving in the week of August 31. The program will start September 8th.

BPC Elders

Class of 2027

Dale McCorkle
Deborah Campbell
David Salmon
Michael Sheehan

Class of 2028

Mary Cappelli
Cheryl March

Class of 2029

Ruth Perella
Lyn Sokol
Robert Cramner

Clerk of Session

Patrick Campbell

Donna's Malawi

Lunch

September 20
November 1

Liturgist Schedule

September

6th - Terry Brown
13th - Shirley Skala
20th - Cheryl March
27th - Debbie Sheehan

Session Meetings

October 4, 2026
November 15, 2026
December 6, 2026
@ 12:00 pm

Counting Team

for September
Deborah Sheehan
Michael Sheehan
Ruh Perella

Rev. Kanaski will be on vacation Tuesday, September 22 to Monday the 28th, In Alina's absence Rev Dr. Colleen Morlinaro will be available for emergency pastoral care. Her phone number is (412) 997-8934. Please call or text if you need assistance. Rev. Dr. Molinaro is the pastor of Carnegie Presbyterian Church.

Christian Ed/Program Commission

- Teen Bible Study is to resume October 11th at 7:00 pm
 - To comply with our Child Safety Guidelines, a second adult is needed to be present at the meetings. Note: you will not be required to teach. Contact the office or Cheryl March if interested. You will need to file for Child Protection Clearances (we will help you with that).
- Plans are in the works for a daytime Bible Study and also a Grief Support group.
- Looking for ideas from the congregation for programs that may be of interest to teens and/or adults.

Congregational Meeting – September 20, 2026

There will be a specially called congregational meeting following worship on Sunday, September 20. There will be two items of business:

1) to amend the church's bylaws to say the following about the nominating committee: **"One member** of this committee shall be designated by and from the session, **and** shall be named by the session as Chair**person. Two members;** none of whom may be in active service on the session, shall be elected by the congregation."

The previous language required a deacon member and a seven total members, which no longer makes sense for us.

2) to elect the two congregation representatives to the nominating committee.

*Nominations from the floor are appropriate, so feel free to nominate someone during the meeting, including yourself. **You must have someone's permission before you nominate them.***

Because this is a specially called meeting, no other business can be discussed.

You can attend the meeting on your computer! You can join the meeting online, without installing anything:

Go to zoom.us/join.

Enter the Meeting ID (883 8754 8513).

There may be a box there to click that says something about joining from your browser. If that box is there, click it.

If there is no box, click 'Join.' Something will pop up inviting you to install Zoom. Click cancel and then click the button that says "Join from browser."

If anything pops up asking for permission to use your microphone and camera, click 'Allow' or 'Yes.'

It may also ask for the password (3275BPC).

We will also email out a link to the meeting. If you have Zoom installed on your computer or phone, you can click on the link to join the meeting.

If you'd like a chance to practice, feel free to call Alina (520-390-2854), and she will be happy to walk you through it. We will also have a practice meeting right after worship on Sunday, September 13th.

You do not come into the office with me or come on visits. You do not see the worship planning or meeting preparation. Let me tell you about how your pastor cares for you and your church.

What your pastor does: funerals

This seems like an appropriate place to start, since we've unfortunately had so many lately.

When I get a call from a member that their loved one has died, I start by expressing my condolences. I offer to share the news with the congregation so they don't have to.

I know this sounds like a silly reminder, but grief can make it hard to remember all sorts of things, so, a few reminders: Please call me, your pastor and let me know that your loved one has died. I cannot know if you do not tell me. And please confirm with me *before* you schedule the funeral service! I cannot promise I will be available at any particular time.

Later, the family and I talk through what they'd like for the service: any music and Scripture they want, where and when they'd like it to be, if anyone from the family would like to say something about the person who's died, if there will be a viewing or a burial as well. All funerals are worship services of Brentwood, so I will coordinate with the office to print bulletins, with Deb if they want music, with the funeral home, and with any other pastors the family would like to be a part of the funeral.

Because all funerals are worship services of Brentwood, the pastor is the one who decides if it is appropriate to invite another pastor to be a part of the service. I always want to work with you to get you the funeral that you want for your loved ones, but sometimes it is inappropriate because a pastor has proven themselves disrespectful of other pastors, is so outside the bounds of what we believe as Presbyterians that they cannot be invited to take part in a worship service, or has a history of disrespecting the family's wishes or disrespecting the church. The pastor's decision on this is prayerfully considered and final.

It is an honor to be a part of funerals: working with the family to honor both their loved one who has died and their own grief, leading others in remembering and grieving, remembering our hope of the resurrection in Jesus Christ, and worshiping together. It can be difficult work, but it is also one of the most important duties of a pastor, and it is an honor.

Finally, if you or a loved one would like to plan your funeral, talk about it, or make other plans around your death, please reach out. I am happy to help, and it really does help your family after you've died. There is a lot to do after a death, and it is a huge relief for them to have one less thing to do and know that the funeral will be exactly as you would have wanted.

An Update on General Assembly

The PC(USA), our denomination holds a national convention called General Assembly every other year to make decisions. It took place this summer from Monday, June 22-Thursday, July 2.

Important decisions from the General Assembly include:

- a call to use AI wisely, and with awareness of the harms it can cause. They also passed a social statement on AI called "The Algorithm and the Almighty."
- a proposed new confession (statement of belief that shapes and guides our life together) didn't pass, but was sent for more churchwide study.
- tweaks to the ordination process, including stricter guidelines around psychological evaluations, increased training for prospective pastors and those on the ordination committee, and an alternative ordination exam.
- amending the *Book of Order* to condemn Christian nationalism. All versions of it "are incompatible with the example and teachings of Jesus Christ, constitute a theological error, undermine the church's faithful witness, and are contrary to the church."
- declaring Israel's war in Palestine a genocide.
- a new churchwide study on sexuality, gender, and family.
- condemning cruel immigration enforcement practices and defending the human rights of migrants, laborers, and the imprisoned.
- officially voting to hold the next General Assembly in Puerto Rico—the first time the Assembly has been held outside the continental US!

All amendments to the *Book of Order* go to presbyteries for vote and must be approved by a 2/3 majority of presbyteries before becoming final.

These decisions were reached by a process of prayer, discernment, discussion, and voting. That doesn't mean we have to agree with them or pretend to; that is not how being Presbyterian works! I'm sure these decisions will continue to be discussed, locally and nationally, and some may even be voted on again. But I think it's important for you to know what's going on in the wider Presbyterian world.

Questions or concerns about any of this? Feel free to reach out to Alina!

For more information, visit <https://sanjosepb.org/ga-227-at-a-glance-key-actions-decisions> or https://www.pcusa.org/sites/default/files/2026-08/2026-0812_GA-in-Brief.pdf