

Pennfield Press

December 2020 Newsletter

Growing Through Faith, Family, and Fellowship

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Dear Friends,

We are in the Season of Advent, which begins on **Sunday, November 29**. We start the journey to Bethlehem to the One who is born to us as Savior and Lord. To be sure this year has been a long journey of hoping and waiting. We have waited for the pandemic to cease, for a proven vaccine to be available to all, for a return to what we once had, such as handshakes and hugs and stores and buildings that could be entered without a mask. Instead, we continue to wait and are adding to the list the coming into our midst of the one who is healer, redeemer, physician, and friend.



For most of us the holidays will look different: no large gatherings in our homes, not 20-pound turkeys, no ugly sweater contests, no unwrapping of gifts under the Christmas tree with family. In place of the usual festivities there are phone and Zoom calls, face time and Skype, and carols and greetings sent online.

And yet, this year Christ will be born again and perhaps in a way that's truer to how it all happened back in Bethlehem so long ago.

Is it not true that the only family gathered at Jesus' birth
were his mom and dad.
None of the gifts they got were store-bought.
The string of lights suspended
were the stars.
The stuffing of the mattress was straw.
The heat was the breath of farm animals.
And the food they ate had been in their knapsack for days.
What if we put ourselves back there,
back in the stable adjacent to the run-down inn,
and bend our knee as far as we are able now
before the Holy Child,
to worship him with gratitude for who he is
and what he gives?



Wishing you a Blessed Advent, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year from all of us here at church.
With love and joy,

Pastor Annemarie



Stewardship and Mission Update

This year's stewardship theme is "Love", or more specifically, "Love, hospitality and being good stewards of God's grace". The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-29) is a good illustration of such love of God and neighbor. It also means providing hospitality to others out of the abundance that we have received. For our giving is ultimately a way of glorifying God and pointing to God's amazing love and grace for us.

This past Sunday, November 22nd, was a very special day on our Church Calendar. It's called "Consecration Sunday" and it's the day when we made our 2021 financial commitment to the Church. I understand the difficulties with attending Sunday's outside service, and therefore I'm pleased with the early response and participation from the Congregation. While I don't have audited number to report at this time, I can tell you early results are encouraging and reflect our members faith and commitments to doing God's work.

Early Pledge Results (11/23/2020):

	11/23/2020	11/5/2019	Total 2019
# of Pledges	21	34	47
\$ Pledged	\$52,968	\$85,778	\$107,222
Avg. Pledge	\$2,522.29	\$2,522.88	\$2,281.32



Important Points to Consider:

- The bad weather Sunday affected turnout for the outside service.
- We are almost at 50% of last year's total amount with well over 50% of the pledge cards outstanding.
- Avg. Pledges are ahead of last year's pace.

For those who have made their pledges, God Bless and thank you. I'm asking those who have not returned their pledge cards to please do so as soon as possible. Session Elder's will begin following up on late pledge cards **the week of December 14th**.

Please remember, giving money to the Church is offering ourselves in service to God. Giving enriches our lives; it makes us stronger in faith, more aware of others' needs, and contributes to the joy of sharing. Moreover, it fulfills our church's mission and provides funding for our ministries and programs.

Blessings,

Tom Beaver Elder
Stewardship and Mission Committee Chair



Opening the Church for In-Person Worship

We will be opening the church for in-person worship starting on **Sunday, Nov. 29**. But be aware that we discourage attendance by those who are currently ill, show symptoms, or are especially vulnerable.

If you choose to attend worship, please be present at least ten (10) minutes prior to 10 a.m. Livestreaming will begin at 10 a.m. Entry will be at the main church door only. We will take your temperature there and expect you to wear a face mask the entire time of worship. You may sit in the designated areas to maintain social distancing. And you are asked to leave the building immediately following worship.

Please respect these guidelines of our Church Safety Team for the benefit of all those in attendance. We will continue to livestream our worship as we have been.

Ordination and Installation of New Officers via Zoom

Given the continued need for social distancing, we will ordain and install our newly elected church officers for elder and deacon at a Zoom meeting. **The meeting will be held on Sunday, Jan. 10 at 11 a.m.** The liturgy for the meeting will be included in your January newsletter.

Those who will be ordained and installed are:

--For elders of the Class of 2023 Tom Beaver, Woody Booher, and Karen Newhard.

--For deacons of the Class of 2023 Rosemary Hahn, Steve Phillips, and Joy Thomas.

--For deacons of the Class of 2021 Lila Back, Marie Hull, and Marcia VanVleet.

Please put the date on your calendar. Also, make sure that you have downloaded Zoom and are able to join us online on that day.





Property and Finance Committee Update

Our boiler is up and running, using a minimum of energy. However, with the extra pressure of this highly efficient piece of equipment an already corroded pipe burst and will need replacing. Our insurance will most likely cover the added cost of materials and labor. But our building is heated and cozy warm. Again, many thanks to all those who so generously donated to our Boiler Fund and made it possible to have a brand new heating system.

The sound and video system is nearly up and running. Due to some back-order delays, a few minor adjustments will still need to be made. As of last week, a monitor in the Nursery and a large monitor in Fellowship Hall have been installed, as have been the two cameras in our sanctuary. Shortly our worship team will receive training on how to operate the new sound and video system.

You may also have noticed the added lighting tracks that illumine the chancel area. With all these recent updates and capital improvements we have truly entered the 21st century and are as a congregation well equipped to reach people with the Gospel far beyond the walls of this church.

Last week, all the carpets in the church were vacuumed and then steam-cleaned by our longtime contractor James Arnold of A & A Carpet Cleaning. Also, several members dusted and polished furniture, tables, and pews and even did some painting of rooms and hallways.

A big shout-out to the faithful and hard-working leaf and outdoors clean-up crew who blew and cleaned up the thousands of leaves on our grounds and picked up sticks.

We are grateful to Joy Thomas, one of our newer members, who has taken on custodial responsibilities and is pitching in full force with cleaning duties. Thank you, Joy! And also thanks to Mick Shubert and to Steve Phillips for the electrical work around the building with the installation of monitors and lights.

--Lois Shubert, Chair
Property and Finance Committee



Adult Education Classes on Sundays

--Contemporary Issues Class

This class meets weekly via Zoom on Sundays at noon. Addressed are topics generated by the "Wired Word," an educational service that takes news articles of current interest in the areas of social, economic, and political relevance and examines them through the lens of the Christian faith. You will receive the articles with discussion questions beforehand. If you would like to join, please contact Tom Beaver at thbeaver@aol.com or by phone.



--Advent Bible Study on the Birth of Jesus



We will study the two birth narratives of Jesus found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Where was Jesus born, in a house or a stable. Who was present, shepherds and angels or Wise Men, and which gifts did he receive? Join us on **Sunday, Dec. 6 at 11 a.m via Zoom** for this **three-week study**. We will meet on Dec. 6, 13, and 20. You may want to read in preparation for the study both birth narratives (Matt. 1-2 and Luke 1-2) and have your Bibles open when we have our lesson.

The class will be taught by Pastor Annemarie.

New Members Slated to be Received

Our Session will meet via Zoom on **Monday, Dec. 14 at 6 p.m.** with three potential new members. They will share their faith journey with the elders. We look forward to officially welcoming them into membership of our church.

Financial Giving

Thank you for your 2021 Pledge. Please remember also to keep your pledges current by mailing in your offering to the church. We appreciate your support of our church programs and ministries. If you would like to know the balance on the current pledge, please call at church our Financial Secretary, Jean Smith.

Online Giving

A quick and easy way to give is through our church website, www.pennfieldpresbyterian.org. Click on the Give Now button. Create a Giving Profile. This will connect you with our Church's Giving Page. Enter either credit card no. or bank routing number and account number. You have the option of giving to the General Fund, which supports our annual budget, or to specific projects, such as capital improvement or the deacons. Thank you for giving!



Musical Talent to Be Featured in December

On Sunday, Dec. 6, we welcome back **Jaelyn Burke** on the violin, accompanied by **Gayla Metzger**. Mrs. Burke studied violin performance at Grand Valley State University and Western Michigan University. She grew up traveling in her military family and now has a family of her own in Battle Creek. She is a member of the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra and is a substitute player for the Kalamazoo Symphony. Jaelyn runs a Violin studio from her home and also teaches students through the Gull Lake Virtual Partnership. It is this program that has led her find a new space to teach here at the church.

Mrs. Burke has also kindly volunteered to play for us in a quartet and lead us in worship on the violin on **Sunday, Dec. 20**. We are so grateful!

On Sunday, Dec. 13 we welcome to our church **Paula Krontz Harris**. Mrs. Harris has been a music teacher, a professional accompanist, and a church musician for most of her adult life. She teaches applied music classes at Kellogg Community College and runs her own music studio. The need to find appropriate facilities for her many piano students has brought her to our church. We are so glad she found us.

For our Christmas Eve service on **Dec. 24 at 7 p.m.**, we welcome **Karla Shotts**. Karla served as our church pianist and choir director until 2018. She has extensive musical training that includes classical vocal performance, and worship and choral conducting. She runs her own piano and voice studio, Music Mentor Studios, and has been a music teacher with Gull Lake Virtual Partnership for the past five years. Our church is home to her music studio and the home school program for lessons and recitals. We are so glad to have her and her husband, Jon, back with us for this festive day.

O Come, Let Us Adore Him!

Please worship with us regularly on Sunday morning at 10 a.m. via facebook live. Invite your friends. And let us know you are online by leaving a comment or liking or sharing the video. Your “clicks” serve as our worship attendance pad. The worship videos stay up for the duration and can be accessed any time at fb Annemarie Kidder or Pennfield Presbyterian Church. Each Wednesday is posted a devotion and on Fridays the scripture on which the upcoming sermon is based.

Christmas Eve Worship Service at 7 p.m.

We will have Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. If you would like to attend, please note the recommendations by our Session and the safety precautions. This service will also be livestreamed from fb Annemarie Kidder and posted later on our fb church page.



Hannah Women's Circle

Hannah Circle will meet on **Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 1:00 p.m.** via Zoom. We are discussing Chapter Two, "Lamenting Together" in the Horizon's Bible study "Into the Light, Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament." This is a fascinating study that gives a new and different perspective on prayer. Marie Hull will send out the Zoom invitation shortly before the meeting. If anyone would like to join this fellowship of women and you are not on the email list, please let me and Marie know and we will be sure you get all the information. There are books available at the church or just join us for the lesson.

--Kathy Lyon, Co-Moderator

Monthly Evening Prayer on Dec. 2 at 6 p.m.

We meet again on **Wednesday, Dec. 2 at 6 p.m.** via facebook live for evening prayer. Go to Annemarie Kidder on facebook and wait for the little notification in the bell icon to appear. Click on that icon, and you will be joined in a live broadcast and be part of a virtual community. Evening prayer is a time of scripture reading, a brief meditation, and lifting up those we wish to pray for. Simply put your requests in the comment section while we are live.

Please invite others to join in this prayer event. Cards are available at church to hand to neighbors and friends.



Total Given for the CROP Walk

Our congregation raised \$399.20 to help our neighbors near and far be fed. Your donation will be well-used whether locally, or somewhere like the Dominican Republic perhaps helping families learn to raise pigs. Church World Service, which is the sponsor of CROP Walks, reports: "We recently caught up with Ramona (who received a piglet years ago and now has a pig farm) and asked her what she would say to CWS donors in the United States. That's when she said something that we've heard from people all over the world and that is pure magic every time you hear it. People in this community aren't looking for handouts, she said. They want to work. They want someone to teach them how to work in a way that will help their families. That's what they really need."

--Marie Hull on behalf of the Board of Deacons

Pastoral Care and Deacons' Ministry

Please continue to check in with one another during this time of physical/social distancing and to lend "a hand" in helping each other connect to livestreamed worship on facebook and to Zoom.

Recently our deacons have implemented a system by which to connect by phone with our entire membership, so you might contact your deacon for help also.

For prayer requests for the Deacons' prayer chain, please contact Ruth TenBroek, moderator of the Board of Deacons. For immediate needs, please contact Pastor Annemarie by e-mail, phone, or text.



Christmas Baskets and How You Can Help



Providing Christmas Baskets of food and gifts for Pennfield families in need has been a long-standing holiday tradition at Pennfield Presbyterian Church. And while many church members look forward to shopping for these families, we will need to do things a bit differently this year.

The deacons still plan to provide a food basket for each of the families. The gifts, however, will be provided to the families in the form of gift cards. The deacons plan to provide a gift of \$25 for each adult for a needed item and \$25 for a needed item as well an additional \$25 for a toy or other fun item for each child. The parents will then be able to use these

gift cards to purchase gifts that can be opened by the family on Christmas.

The total value of the food box, a gift card for additional food purchases, and the gift cards for presents will amount to a little over \$300 per family. The church is supporting 7 families this year, with a total of 25 children, and 14 adults. Two of the adults are military veterans, one of whom is a Marine who is just home for the Christmas holiday.

So, in lieu of shopping for these Pennfield families in need, the deacons are asking congregation members to assist them financially this Christmas Season. If you would like to help out, please go to the church's website (<https://pennfieldpresbyterian.org>) to make a donation to this mission. You may also mail a check directly to the church office. Please make a note, in either case, that the donation is for the Deacon's Christmas Fund. If you have any questions at all, feel free to contact Ruth TenBroek or Marie Hull.

We hope that you all stay safe this Christmas Season. We also hope, with this Christmas mission, to bring a little bit of joy to some families in the Pennfield area that really need it —particularly this year! Thank you so much!

--Ruth TenBroek, Moderator of Deacons

December Means: Donating to the Deacons' Fund

Annually in December, the Deacons are asking for your financial support in order to carry out their ministries throughout the year. The ministry of providing Christmas baskets and gifts to needy families in our community is by far the most costly of these programs. This year especially we hope that we can count on your donation.

During this month, please mail a check to the church with the word "Deacons" on the memo line. You may also give online by designating your financial gift to the Deacons. Please know that the Deacons are working hard to get the best value for the dollars you send.



Food Bank Updates



Reminder: Meijer on Beckley has Simply Give Double Match Days on December 1st and 12th. Your \$10.00 contribution becomes \$30.00 with a match from Meijer. Your contribution supports the Neighborhood Food Pantry Ministries of which Northeast Food Pantry is a member. PPC helps support Northeast pantry. Donation cards are available at the registers. Just pick up a card or more and present them to the cashier. The cashier will ring them up and you can pay for them there. You can keep the cards for tax purposes if you want. This is just another way of helping those people in need in our community. Thank you, Laurie Riley

Looking for Financial Church Secretary

Our beloved Jean Smith, Financial Secretary and So Much More, has shared with us her intention to retire. But she will stay on to train. Responsibilities include logging financial contributions and issuing giving statements, as well as routine office work and answering the phone. The position is for 10 to 15 hours a week. Please spread the word and have any candidates interested send a letter of intent with CV to Pastor Annemarie Kidder at annemariesk59@gmail.com.

Our Sympathy

Our prayers are with the family of Elder Burrel Stults, who joined the Church Triumphant on Nov. 25, two days before his 84th birthday, in the presence of his wife, Deanna, and son, Denny. Funeral arrangements are pending. A memorial service is planned for next spring or summer.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- Dec. 3: Kathy Adler
- 4: Beth Tucker
- 5. Sandra Shaffer
- 6. Karen Lewis
Darrell VanVleet
- 9. Kathy Lyon
- 10: Aaron Jordan 1992
- 11: Elsie Page
- 12: Karen Newhard
- 13: Jeanette Higgs
Michael Lockett
- 17: Sandy Prince
- 18: Cathy Walsh Boyer
Elijah Brown
- 19: Christine Ayres
- 21: Allison Baxter
LuAnne Pierson
- 29: Joshua Tucker



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- Dec. 19: John and Linda Baxter

Comment Section with Liturgy for the Second Sunday in Advent, Dec. 6

Opening Prayer (in unison):

God of all peoples,

your servant John came baptizing

and calling for repentance.

Help us to hear his voice of judgment,

that we may also rejoice in his word of promise,

and be found pure and blameless in that glorious day

when Christ returns to rule the earth. Amen.

Hymn after Sermon:

#10 "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

announces that the Lord is nigh;

awake and hearken, for he brings

glad tidings of the King of kings!

Then cleansed be every life from sin;

make straight the way for God within,

and let us all our hearts prepare

for Christ to come and enter there.

We hail you as our Savior, Lord,

our refuge, and our great reward;

O let your face upon us shine

and fill the world with love divine.

All praise to you, eternal Son,

whose advent has our freedom won,

whom with the Father we adore,

and Holy Spirit, evermore.

Communion Liturgy

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Song during Communion (sing three times)

2164 "Sanctuary"

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,

pure and holy, tried and true.

With thanksgiving, I'll be a living

sanctuary for you.

Prayer after Communion (in unison)

Praise to God who gives hope and freedom.

Blessed be God who alone has called us,

And to whom we offer all that we are

and all that we shall become in Christ. Amen.



