

Pennfield Press

December 2023 Newsletter

Growing in Christ Through Faith, Family, and Fellowship

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Dear Friends,

We are beginning a new church year with the season of Advent. The word "Advent" means coming, for we await the coming of God to us in the flesh, in person. The longing to see a friend or loved one in person is natural. We can keep in touch by mail, email, and phone. We can even use Skype and Facetime. But to actually see and meet the other in the flesh outdoes it all.

The church through the centuries has set aside Advent as a time of spiritual preparation. Why not use this season then to be more intentional about meeting people in person, making a visit at their place, going out for coffee, and attending worship in person as well.

We begin the Advent season with **Communion Sunday on Dec. 3**. After worship, we will decorate the church and sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season with the Hanging of the Greens. The Presbyterian Women will have a meal ready for us afterwards. Do join us in the fun and fellowship!



The men of the church will be meeting that same day **at 7 a.m.** for the **Men's Breakfast** and afterwards study the preaching text of the day with the pastor.



On **Sundays, Dec. 10 and Dec. 17**, we will explore during adult education the origins and traditions of celebrating Advent and Christmas. Please bring your own story to share and/or some items that have become meaningful to you during this season.

And on **Sunday, Dec. 24** we will have **two worship services**.

We meet at our regular time at 9:50 a.m. And we will rejoice on **Christmas Eve at 7 p.m.** with the singing of carols and the hearing of lessons to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Please note that there will be **no worship service on Dec. 31**.

Let us now prepare our hearts and make ready for Jesus' birth.
In Christ's love,

Pastor Annemarie

Adult Education Classes

--The Wired Word/Contemporary Issues Class

This class is currently on a hiatus and may start up again in the New Year. If you would be interested in helping convene or facilitate the class, please let Mark Atma know at markatma@comcast.net.



--Christmas Traditions, History and Practices, Dec. 10 and 17

On both Sundays at 11:15 a.m. in the sanctuary, we will explore the origins of some of our beloved Christmas traditions. For example, when and where originated the Christmas tree, the Advent wreath, the ornaments of angels and stars, the Advent calendar, Santa Claus, the creche or Nativity, and Christmas bells.

Also, please bring your favorite Advent/Christmas ornament, story, or recipe to church for a show and tell. And don't forget to invite a friend!

Fellowship and Evangelism

Our early Thanksgiving meal was a real hit with over forty people in attendance. Thanks to all who brought goodies and special thanks to Lois Shubert and Christine Ayres who provided the turkey. Also thanks to Laurie Riley, Jean Smith, and several others for their help with clean-up.

Our next Fellowship event will be the Wassail and Cookies on Dec. 24, Christmas Eve after worship. We are asking for cookies or treats to share, which you may bring to church that morning. And remember to invite family and friends for our **Christmas Eve service on Sunday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m.**

--Sara Galloway, Chair

Greeters

Dec. 3 Bill and Sandi Rothney
Dec. 10 Mark Atma and Ruth TenBroek
Dec. 17 Chris Beaver and Joann Preston
Dec. 24 Bruce and Karen Newhard

Refreshments

Debbie Trayer and Christine Ayres
Mark Atma and Ruth TenBroek
Darrell and Marcia VanVleet
Mick and Lois Shubert

Stewardship and Mission

Thank you for turning in your Stewardship card on Stewardship Sunday. If you have yet to do so, you may mail your card or simply call the church office with your pledge information.

“Give thanks with a grateful heart; give thanks to the Holy One;

give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ his Son. . . “

--Aaron Jordan, Chair of Stewardship and Mission



Property and Finance

As the year draws to a close, big thank yous are due to our lawn mowing crew, who have been keeping our five acres of property looking its best. Also, thank you to the many people on our cleaning crew who sweep floors, clean toilets, and vacuum and dust. Finally, a big thank you goes to our treasurers, Sandy Shaffer and Bill Rothney, who oversee the paying of our bills, and to Jean Smith, who tallies up your giving.



Please remember our **church-wide rummage sale in May** of next year. We are asking you to start decluttering your basements, closets, and attics and bringing your donations to church. Small items may be brought to church in a box or bag and left in the room next to the Church Library. No books or clothes, please! Larger items will need coordinating with Lois Shubert or Christine Ayres.

--Lois Shubert, Chair of Property and Finance

Worship and Music

On Sunday, Dec. 3 we will decorate the church with the Hanging of the Greens, followed by a meal of soup, bread, and dessert provided by the Presbyterian Women. We will also offer that day a Bake Sale with all proceeds going to mission.

On Dec. 10 and 17 at 11:15 a.m., Pastor Annemarie will share some of the Advent and Christmas traditions and their origins. We are also asking you to share a story, recipe, or Christmas tradition, and do some show and tell.

On Sunday, Dec. 17 we will begin singing Christmas carols in worship. And I hope you will join us on Sunday, Dec. 24 for both services, at 9:50 a.m. and for Christmas Eve at 7 p.m.

On a closing note, please be vigilant as COVID, flu, and other infections have begun to circulate again.

--Christine Ayres, Chair of Worship and Music



Office Hours



Jean Smith, our financial/office secretary, is at church from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays, along with a few hours on Thursday or Friday.

Poinsettia Orders due by Dec. 3

Please submit your orders for a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one by Sunday, Dec. 3. They are \$10 each. You may submit a form or call the church office.

Worship: In-Person and Via Facebook Live

We meet for in-person worship and we livestream via facebook. If you attend in person, please be present no later than 9:50 a.m. The first ten minutes prior to the live broadcast will include announcements, sharing of information, and pastoral prayer requests.

We livestream worship each week from Pastor Annemarie's Facebook page at 10 a.m. Please leave a comment and like. Each Wednesday the Pastor posts a devotion and on Fridays the scripture on which the upcoming sermon is based. All posts are also on our church's FB page and remain there.

Deacons' Corner

This season, the Deacons will be sponsoring three local families with children, provided through the Public Schools and Santa's Helpers. One family has two adults and two children; one has two adults and one child; and a third has one single mom and two children. As last year, each family will receive a Christmas goodie bag from our church, a gift card to Meijer for \$200, and an invitation to join us for worship. The deacons will also deliver poinsettias to the homebound.

December is also the month to raise funds for the Deacons' ministries, such as the Christmas families, the flowers in May and December, and the monthly meal at the Salvation Army. You can find envelopes marked "Deacons" in the pews and I hope you will give generously.

Jessica Harvath will serve: Adler - Carter

Karen Newhard will serve: Cope- Heath

Harry Scheuffele will serve: Hewitt- Metzger

Susan Jordan will serve: Monroe - Riley

Carla Stine-King will serve: Rose - Stevens

Mark Baxter will serve: Stine-King - Walker

If you have a prayer request, please contact me at jessicaharvath1964@gmail.com.

--Jessica Harvath, Deacon Moderator



New Promotion for the Food Pantry

Family Fare grocery chain has again created a program to help non-profits earn cash. By buying their Family brand products and saving the UPC barcodes from cans, boxes and bottles we can earn money for our Food Pantry. For each bundle of 500 Our Family UPC barcodes collected and clipped from participating nonprofits one can earn \$25 in cash. Over 2,000 products qualify for this campaign. A basket for collecting receipts of bar codes will be in the Narthex.

--Laurie Riley and Christine Ayres

Northeast Food Pantry News

The Northeast Food Pantry has been very busy with the holidays approaching. Last year, from Oct. 2022 to Sept. 2023, the Pantry has served 8,246 individuals which includes 2703 family units and 3408 children. Many of the children only receive diapers, wipes, and formula because we are also a diaper pantry. This means our pantry has served more people than any other in the area.

Meijer Simply Give 2023 Holiday campaign runs through Dec. 31. The next Double Match day is Dec. 16. I will be willing to take any donations given to me for this purpose on that day.

Any food items are welcome for donations especially boxed cereal, crackers in sleeves, canned fruit, soup and vegetables and staples such as flour, salt, sugar, mayo, mustard, ketchup and cooking oil. Also welcomed are toilet paper, bar soap, and kids snacks for kids. Thank you for helping to provide food for our neighbors in need.

--Laurel Riley, Coordinator



Presbyterian Women (PW) and Hannah Circle Bible Study

Thank you for your generous contributions to the Bedding Blitz. We received: New Pillows - 29, Throw blankets - 3, Throw Pillow - 1, Pillow Shams - 4, Quilts - 2, Blankets - 9, Single Sheets - 3, Sets of Sheets - 2. All was donated to the Charitable Union.

On Sunday, Dec. 3 we will be decorating for Advent and Christmas after worship with the **Hanging of the Greens**. We will gather for a meal afterwards. That day we will also have the **PW Bake Sale**, so, Ladies, please bring to church your goodies that you wish to donate to raise funds for mission.

The sock, mitten, and hat tree is up now and will display your donations. You may simply “decorate” the tree throughout the month. All donations will go to Charitable Union.

--Lois Shubert, Moderator

The Hannah Circle will meet on **Tuesday, Dec. 19 at 12:30 p.m. in the church library**. Please bring your own lunch and drink. Our study will begin at 1 p.m. Due to last month’s cancellation, we will study the same lesson as planned, namely “A Bleeding Woman Encounters Christ” (Luke 8:43-48). All women of the church are invited.

--Deanna Stults, Bible Study Facilitator



The PW Advent Tea

The Presbyterian Women Advent Tea will be held at the **First Presbyterian Church of Battle Creek on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 1 p.m.** All women are invited. The church is located at 111 Capital Ave. in Battle Creek. No reservations are needed.

Festival Series at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Battle Creek

We are invited to join in a celebration of the beginning of Advent on **Sunday, Nov. 3 at 5 p.m.** at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Battle Creek. The exceptional Schola choir of St. Thomas will lead the congregation in a service that includes the great O Antiphons from the ancient church, as well as scripture, anthems, and hymns that highlight this journey toward the birth of Christ.

The second event will be on **Sunday, Dec. 17 at 5 p.m.** with a service of Lessons and Carols. It will be sung by the St. Thomas Choir & Choristers. Both services are a gift to the community by the St. Thomas Music Ministry under the direction of Stephen White, Director of Music. The church is located at 16 E. Van Buren Street, Battle Creek.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Dec. 3: Kathy Adler

4: Beth Tucker

5: Sandra Shaffer

6: Karen Lewis; Darrell VanVleet; Jo VanBoven

9: Kathy Lyon

10: Aaron Jordan

12: Karen Newhard

13: Jeanette Higgs

17: Sandra Prince

18: Cathy Boyer

18: Elijah Brown

19: Christine Ayres

21: Allison Baxter; LuAnne Pierson

23: Franklin Ballard

29: Joshua Tucker



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Dec. 19: John and Linda Baxter

**Wishing You a Blessed Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
From Our Elders and Staff**

