

December 2015

The First Press



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From the Pastor

When I think of the 40's I think of WWII and the challenges it presented and sacrifices people made. I think of stories my father told about rationing, scarcity, and people pitching in together. I think of the challenges it presented, how people needed to step up and take on new responsibilities that were out of their comfort zones. What those dark days produced

was in Tom Brokaw's words, "The Greatest Generation."

While the church in the Southern Hemisphere is thriving, the church in Western Hemisphere is facing great challenges; practically dead in Europe and facing steady decline in North America. Unfortunately we, as a congregation, are not immune to these patterns.

We are declining, perhaps not as rapidly as some of our neighbors, but we are declining. We are facing challenges of resources, needing people to work together, and to take on additional responsibilities.

I have three optimistic thoughts regarding the challenges we are facing. The wave of young families that have joined our

congregation in recent years brings energy and enthusiasm. There is a pattern throughout the Bible of followers of God facing great challenges, not unlike what our nation faced in the early 40's, the end result is people of strong faith. Finally, and most importantly, the church is Christ's bride. Think about the traditional vows taken at weddings. I knew a couple that got married on December 8, 1941; he got a 24-hour pass before being deployed. I met them along with their children and grandchildren, 52 years later. Know that God loves His bride, will care for His bride, and be with His bride through good times and bad.

Jim

In honor of the upcoming Christmas cantata, our December newsletter theme is homecoming. The vintage Christmas postcards are from the 1920s given to Sharon Dittmar's grandparents Lester and Grace Herman.



Birthdays and Anniversaries

1-Maggie Storm
 3-Peggie Ulp, Erik Temple
 4-David Han, Addison Weaver
 5 - Marcia Aikey
 6-Cole Temple
 8-Jackie Wottrich
 9-Hannah Jones
 10-Katie Young
 12 - Kirsten Winner
 18-Carol Crago, Don Dobbs, Mike Redding,
 Calvin Reif, Nate Fox
 19-Naomi Gartzke, Kathy Davies
 20-Amy Tirpak
 21-Ally Weaver
 22 - Reese Underkoffler
 23 - Marguerite Santorine
 24 - David McCord, Nancy Martin, Ed Dame
 28-Betty Comerer, Sharon Dittmar
 31-Libby Robinson



8-Jim & Pauline King celebrating their 20th
 12-Kirk & Paige Kerstetter celebrating their 16th
 13-Brad & Heidi Zimmerman celebrating their 14th
 28 - Drew & Anna Griffith celebrating their 2nd
 29 - Rich & Amy Cooper celebrating their 31st
 29 - Dale & Mindy Lind celebrating their 31st
 29- Rob & Karen Guissanie celebrating their 24th



Clothes Tree

The Council of Churches, in conjunction with the Eastern Union County Clothes Share Program will once again be providing, as Christmas gifts,

new pajamas, hooded sweatshirts, hats and gloves to the children registered with the Food Bank. We welcome donations of **new pajamas, hooded sweatshirts, hats and gloves** but encourage monetary donations and/or gift cards. (Gift cards make it much easier to shop for the children, who range in age from newborn to 18 years.) Most of our children are in the 10 to 14 year range, adult sizes. Please place your items on our clothes tree in the parlor **by Sunday December 13th**. Checks and gift cards can be given to Lisa Bernard, or the church office.

A Gift from God

In the flurry of preparation that descends on the typical American household at Christmas time, it's not unusual to find under the limbs of the tree a gift that has lost its name tag. After poking and feeling the contours of the package, the giver and recipient are usually identified, and the ceremony resumes. My gift to friends and strangers alike this year is a gift without a name. When my family couldn't discern a giver, we usually said, "It's from Santa!" Since my unauthored gift comes from the Bible, my answer is, "It's from God!"

If the book of Hebrews is as familiar to you as a soft, old sweater, I invite you to don it yet again and feel anew how it is shaped to the contours of your body. If it remains one of those short, unexplored books near the back of the Bible, I invite you to try it on again; time may have helped it to settle more comfortably on your shoulders.

Whether the author of Hebrews is Paul, Luke, Apollos, or Priscilla, Hebrews speaks with stunning relevance to those of us who, like the Jewish Christians of the 1st Century, are tempted to doubt the sufficiency of Jesus Christ as our Savior and our Lord. For the Jewish Christians, temptation lay in clinging to their highly respected Jewish Law. For us, temptation resides in an array of secular, works-oriented ways of thinking. In thirteen carefully reasoned chapters, the writer of Hebrews builds an air-tight case for the superiority, supremacy, and sufficiency of Jesus Christ. He or she then encourages his readers, including us, to hold on to our faith, lift up one another, and look forward to Christ's return.

The true gift within this book is Jesus Christ himself. For centuries, men and women lived under the Old Covenant, a system of ceremonial laws and animal sacrifice intended to prepare the people for the coming of Christ. With Jesus Christ and the New Covenant, shadow has turned into sunlight; rehearsal into opening night. By going to the Cross, Jesus, the new High Priest, has become, for all who confess our sins, a one-time, perfect, and final sacrifice. Through Him we have instant, constant access to our triune God, who lives within us as our Creator, Savior, and Lord.

Take a few minutes daily this month to unplug and unwind with Scripture. Read anew the words of Hebrews 10: 15-16, where the writer recalls the prophetic words of Jeremiah: "This is the covenant I will make with them / after that time, says the Lord. / I will put my laws in their hearts, / and I will write them on their minds. / Their sins and lawless acts / I will remember no more" [Jer. 31:33-4].

As we rejoice anew over God's gift of forgiveness and forgetfulness, may we be spurred on to renewed faith, witness, love, and service—in this Christmas season and in the year to come.

Bob Kribbs



First Presby Kids

We're off to a great start in our church school year! In Sunday School, and during worship, we will be looking at the Christmas story and discussing how we prepare for the coming of Jesus!

JAM fun in December-We're going to be growing our relationship with God this year by studying the Lord's Prayer and exploring how we should talk to God. We will be meeting on Wednesday December 2 and 16 from 5-7 PM in the Great Hall. All kids in grades kindergarten- grade five are welcome to join us. Remember, dinner is included! On Dec. 2 we will have our regular curriculum meeting. On the 16th, we will be having our annual Christmas party with crafts, yummy treats and our Christmas themed gift exchange. Remember to bring a wrapped Christmas item (think socks, ornament, etc) worth under \$5 with you on the 16th. Parents are welcome to stay that night!

Movie Night will be on Friday Dec. 11th. We will be watching Home Alone-a holiday favorite in the Dame household. Join us at 5:30 for dinner and a movie in the Great Hall-remember your pjs and sleeping bag!

Rhiannon Dame



Congregational Life 2016 Events

Quarterly Daytime Senior Luncheon

Bob & Sharon Kribbs Linda Cox
Rick & Kathy Gathman Bonnie Troxell
Dave & Mary Ruth Campbell Seth & Judith Ziegler

Progressive Dinner Jan. 9

Jeff & Rochelle Jones Bart & Linda Shaffer
Rob & Karen Guissanie Seth & Vickie Ziegler

Winter Retreat at Susque Jan. 29-31

Office Staff
Mark & Amie Reif Connie Moore

Fun Night; Bingo/Soup Cookoff Feb. 17

Dave & Ruth McCord Barb Schmidt
Alesia Foster Tom & Marilyn Gresh
Patrick & Emily Chiboroski

Spring Annual Mtg./Luncheon Mar. 6

Sharon Pearce Dave & Ruth McCord
Tom & Ann Miller Terry & Barb Light
Noel Curtis Marge Gill
Bill & Linda Snyder

Easter Breakfast Mar. 27

Skip Miller Chris Zellmann
Bill & Lisa Bernard Carolyn Campagna
Rob & Lisa Black

Girls of All Ages Event Apr. 10

Suky Han Heidi DeCosmo
Kathy Schwieger Amber Lind
Avis Hans Lisa Kraus
Paula Young Natalie Grimes

All Church Penns Cave Event Apr. 30

Ed & Rhiannon Dame
David & Carolyn McSween

Bike Ride May 15

Dave & April Shrom Rusty & Karen Graber
Dave & Libby Robinson

All-Church Picnic May 29

Keith & Pat Ringkamp Tom & Ann Miller
Aaron & Molly Roussell Tom & Avis Hans
Mike & Jackie Mast Mark & Jessica Heid
Dan & Katie Cavanagh Kirk & Nicole Jarrett

Strawberry Festival June 12

Dave & April Shrom Mark & Kathy Davies
Aaron & Molly Roussell Ken & Jeannie Lepley
Tom & Ann Miller Rusty & Karen Graber
Carol Crago Jeanette Campbell
Mike & Amy Matukaitis Karen Ishii

All Church Knoebel's Picnic July 17

Mike & Jackie Mast Bill & Ann Roll
Kirk & Nicole Jarrett John & Cindy Jones
Rick & Lisa Stancavage

Church Picnic at Kelly Sept. 11

Ryan & Laura Graver Brad & Ashley Papson
Matt & Ashley Kalcich Dan & Kim Wagner
Ken & Corey Jusko

Leaf Peeper Hike Oct. 16

Bill & Sharon Dittmar Bill & Ann Roll
Dave & Ruth McCord Don & Glenn Dobbs
Steve & Alesia Foster

Adult Bowling Night Oct. 22

Mark & Leslie Temple Sharon Pearce
Brad & Heidi Zimmerman Gerry Schweiger
Dale & Mindy Lind Mark & Amie Reif
Jon & Sandy Miller

*denotes conveners

Congregational Life 2016 Events continued

Fall Annual Mtg/Luncheon Nov. 13
 Dave & Ruth McCord Mark & Liz Speake
Bob & Christena Harder Jim & Patty Apple
 Roger & Nancy Curran Jim & Marilyn Zaiser

Hanging of the Greens Nov. 27
 Carol Thomas Marilyn Gaver
 Peg Erdley Susan Erdley
 Melanie Brown Jeff Creighton
 Skip Miller Alice Marquart
 Leslie Temple Jack & Rebecca Mignot

Christmas Dinner Dec. 4
Jan Temple Jackie Mast
 Lori Barth Jim & Ginny Michael
 Chrissy Reinhart Dan & Katie Cavanagh
 Don & Glenn Dobbs Dave & Marcia Thomas
 John & Jessie Walsh Paul & Marsha Tarves

Taking Down Greens Dec. 28
 Carol Thomas Alice Marquart
 Richard Erdley Keith & Dianna Kunkel
 Wayne & Pat Samuelson
 Jack & Rebecca Mignot

*denotes conveners



By the grace of God, and with the help of His many servants that contributed their time, talents, and treasures over the past several weeks, and throughout the year, Operation Christmas Child's Susquehanna Valley Team had another GREAT year!

Statistics:

*Shoebboxes collected from 8 relay centers (McClure, Williamsport, Paxinos, Bloomsburg-Buckhorn, Richfield, Mifflinburg, plus two new this year at Cogan Station and Watsonstown) and the Lewisburg Collection Center = 20,677. In 2014 there were 19,495. The 2015 number is an **increase of 1,182 shoebboxes!***

We ran out of trailer space this year! We over-stuffed four trailers and could not fit any more on (can you see us smiling). Those 4 trailers are on their way to Baltimore for processing, and we still have 492 shoebboxes in 30 cartons plus 10 cartons of filler items left to go (can you see us smiling more). Somehow we will find a way to get those gifts to Baltimore in the next two weeks. (God has a plan!)

Shoebboxes donated at First Presbyterian Lewisburg Collection Center = 7,345. Lewisburg 1st Presbyterian Church had a total of 1,040 this year (of which 841 were from shoebox madness.) In 2014 our total was 1,431.

Since the year 2000, a total of 319,263 shoebboxes have been collected in our region and shipped from Lewisburg. We only have records back to 2000, but we know our involvement went back into the mid-1990's.

Thanks for all your help, support, prayers, gifts, sweat and smiles !!! Many many volunteers make this mission happen.

In His service, Amie and Mark Reif, Co-Collection Center Coordinators

December 2015

First Presby Youth



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Girl Talk 2:20 Refuge 7-8:30pm	2 Breakfast 6:30am Fuel 7-8:30pm	3	4	5
6 Sunday School 9-10am Worship @ 10:30 Christmas Program and Dinner 5pm	7	8 Girl Talk 2:30 Refuge 7-8:30pm	9 Breakfast 6:30am Fuel 7-8:30pm	10 Rejoicing Spirits 6:30pm	11 Riverwoods Service Project & Dinner 4pm	12
13 Sunday School 9-10am Worship @ 10:30	14	15 Girl Talk 2:30 Refuge 7-8:30pm Christmas Party!	16 Breakfast 6:30am Fuel 7-8:30pm Christmas Party!	17	18	19 Cantata Dress Rehearsal 10am
20 Sunday School 9-10am Choir Cantata 10:30am	21	22	23 Christmas Eve Services	24 Christmas Day	25	26
27 No Sunday School Worship @ 10:30	28	29	30	31		

COLOR KEY: Green Events - ALL youth event
Blue Events - Middle School events
Red Events - High School events
Black Events - College age events

Questions or comments? Feel free to contact us: Lauren and Tim Halteman, Youth Directors
Office: 570-524-4419, lhalteman@first-presby.org, thalteman@first-presby.org

Rejoicing Spirits-- All youth are invited to help out at this special service. Thursday Dec. 10th, at St. Paul's church. Meet us there at 6:15pm.

RIVERWOODS LIGHTING EVENT -

The youth will be lighting luminaries at Riverwoods again this year! Join us for this special service project, all youth are welcome. Meet at church on Friday Dec. 11th at 3:30, we will light the candles then go out for dinner!

National What Day?

This month, join us for youth breakfasts as we celebrate National Fritter, Pastry and Chocolate Covered Anything Days.





December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 10:00 Staff Mtg 3:00 Girl Talk 7:00 Refuge 7:00 NA	2 6:30 Y Breakfast 10:00 LAMBS 5:00 JAM 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 Fuel 7:30 Choir	3 6:00 DBR 7:00 NA	4 7:00 NA	5 7:00 NA
6 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 4:00 Christmas Program and Dinner	7 9:15 Trainers 7:30 Missions	8 10:00 Staff Mtg 3:00 Girl Talk 7:00 Refuge 7:00 NA	9 6:30 Y Breakfast 10:00 LAMBS 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 Fuel 7:30 Choir	10 6:00 DBR 7:00 NA	11 5:30 JAM Movie Night 7:00 NA	12 7:00 NA
13 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	14 9:15 Trainers	15 10:00 Staff Mtg 3:00 Girl Talk 7:00 Refuge Christmas 7:00 NA	16 6:30 Y Breakfast 10:00 LAMBS 5:00 JAM 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 Fuel Christmas 7:30 Choir	17 6:00 DBR 7:00 NA	18 7:00 NA	19 Cantata Rehearsal 7:00 NA
20 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	21 9:15 Trainers 7:00 Session, Deacons, Trustees	22 10:00 Staff Mtg 7:00 NA	23	24 Office Closed 7:00 NA 7:00 Worship 9:00 Worship	25 11-11 Christmas Dinner 7:00 NA	26 7:00 NA
27 10:30 Worship	28	29 10:00 Staff Mtg 7:00 NA	30	31 7:00 NA		



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 Dr. James C. King

**Living fully in Christ, through His Word,
 community and mission**

Ushers: Clint Shurtliffe, Dave Nicholson, Dave Young,, Joe Santorine, Mark Reif, Mike and Jackson Matukaitis, Peg Bouton, Sharon Pierce

Nursery	Greeters	Coffee	Advent Candles
6. P. Samuelson, G. Dobbs. Chiboroski	Terry & Barb Light	Mark & Liz Speake	Mudge
13 Bill & Ann Roll, Graver family	Host family	Matt & Wendy McTammany	Bedell
20 Heid family	TBD	Mark & Amie Reif	Kratzer/Moore
24 -	7:00 Taylor family	-	McSween
-	9:00 Leshar family	-	Kraus
27 Jusko family, TBD	TBD	-	

Dinner By the River Teams: 3; Miller, 10: Storm, 17: Keiser/Bruckhart

Christmas Cantata Sunday Dec. 20th at 10:30



Join us Sunday morning during the worship service on Dec. 20th for a 1940's Christmas Homecoming. The cantata is written in the musical style of Swing and Big Band. Music of this genre is as popular with people of all ages today as it was when first introduced. Crafted in a Broadway manner, complete with an accompanying play, will provide a fresh way of sharing God's wonderful gift of Jesus, our Savior. May you be inspired by its message as much as the participants were rehearsing it. The Christmas Cantata has been a wonderful tradition at First Presby. Mark your calendars and plan on being here for the cantata.