

December 2017

Leslie's Musings

December 2017



Good News Gazette

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
O blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.

Advent is a strange season. It's especially strange during liturgical year B, which begins on December 3 this year. The Gospel for the year is Mark, which starts not with Jesus' birth, but rather his baptism and goes immediately into his ministry. (That's a bit of an inside joke; everything in Mark happens immediately!) So what happens with no nativity, no shepherds or angels, to say nothing about wise men?

Well, we can remember that Advent is a time of holy waiting. During the days when the New Testament was composed, believers thought the Parousia, the Messiah's return, was around the corner. Tomorrow. Before they died, for absolutely sure. Except it didn't happen that way.

So the scriptures we use during this season are a bit dark and apocryphal, exhorting us to prepare ourselves for the Christ's return. Make sure all our spiritual affairs are in order, just as we would prepare our material goods for our (eventual) death. Advent has something, but not everything, to do with preparing for the birth of our Savior.

Believe me, I know lots of people want to come to church come December and sing Christmas carols every week. I understand. But if we take away the time of waiting, it's a bit like a pregnancy. As much as a mother-to-be would like the discomfort to end, it's much better for both baby and mom if it goes full-term.

So enjoy your Advent. I love the devotional this year, which is for families small and large. If you're the type who loves Instagram or Facebook, ask me about AdventWord 2017. And Marla Maertin found an amazing project called a Reverse Advent Calendar: Find two wine boxes. Every day of December, put an item in a slot—food, shampoo, diaper wipes, you get the idea—and then donate the whole thing to a food pantry. Bring it here and I'll deliver it. Or call me and I'll pick it up. It would be good for me to visit more of you at your homes! What a fantastic idea for families with young ones about, to see generosity in action.

Also, let us remember that the pre-Christmas season is incredibly stressful for many, especially those who have recently lost a loved one, or those who are trying to maintain a balanced diet or weight, or those who struggle with addictions. Some people just find this time of year depressing, when it's dark so much of the day.

Play your Christmas carols to your heart's content at home; come carol with the kids at DeGraff on December 3; sing along in the stores; and enjoy them during the pageant on December 17! But let's contemplate the loveliness that Advent brings. Please. Meanwhile, see you in church.

*Love,
Leslie*

Words from the Worship Ministry Team

Happy are the people
whose God is the
LORD!
Psalm 144:15

WMT DATES: **DECEMBER 2017**

8:30am: A Short Advent Communion Worship every Sunday before Christmas in the Parlor

Sun, Dec 3 - 8:30am - Advent Communion Worship with
Pastor Leslie - Parlor

11am - 1st Advent Sunday; Worship with Pastor Leslie;
Intinction Communion;

Sun, Dec 10 - 8:30am - Advent Communion Worship with
Pastor Leslie - Parlor

11am - 2nd Advent Sunday; Worship with Pastor Leslie

Sun, Dec 17 - 8:30am - Advent Communion Worship with
Pastor Leslie - Parlor

11am - 3rd Advent Sunday; Worship with Pastor Leslie;

Sunday School Pageant ~ "A Very Opinionated Christmas
Tree"

4:00pm - **Blue Christmas Worship**

Wed, Dec 20 - 6:30pm - Healing Worship Service with
Pastor Leslie

Sun, Dec 24 - 8:30am - Advent Communion Worship with
Pastor Leslie - Parlor

11am - 4th Advent Sunday; Worship with Pastor Leslie

8:00pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Worship
with Pastor Leslie

Sun, Dec 31st - 11am - "Lessons & Carols" led by our Music
"Ministers"

Candlelight Communion Worship Meeting for Ushers/Servers

A meeting is scheduled for December 24 at 10am in the Sanctuary for ushers/servers who are helping in the 8pm Candlelight Communion Worship Service.

BLUE CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICE



December 17 at 4pm. For some, Christmas is the most difficult time of the year. Whether because of depression, the loss of a loved one, addiction issues, divorce or plain old loneliness, it can be hard to find ways to live with grief, anger, numbness or sadness. Comfort may feel like it is almost impossible to find. As an antidote, we'll gather for a Blue Christmas Worship Service. The tone will be more somber but hopeful. We'll light candles, sing, and pray. Please feel free to invite family/friends, or come in solidarity and support for those who need it.

Service of Blessing and Healing

On the third Wednesday of the month, we offer a special worship service for Blessing and Healing. We offer anointing prayer, communion (gluten free option available). The service is open and welcome to all. Please see Pastor Leslie if you have questions. The next service will be held on:

Wednesday, December 20 at 6:30pm

COOKIE EXCHANGE & OPEN HOUSE ~ Friday, December 15 from 4-7pm

You're invited to Pastor Leslie's annual
Cookie Exchange/Open House!

Feel free to bring a dozen cookies to exchange. I'll provide the
food and beverages:

51 Rockne Road, Town of Tonawanda

We hope to see you there!



My heart is warmed again by your love and generosity! Thank you for honoring the 10th anniversary of my ordination with a stole of my choice. (As soon as it arrives, I'll post a photo.)

Love, Leslie

WMT Co-Chairs: Elder Shirley Hagle & Pat Loeswick

Members: Jane Crossan, Janet Haacker, Marla Maartin, Laura Marohn, Janet Schurr

Special Worship Coordinator: Peggy Brown

Spiritual Advisor: Pastor Leslie

Music Notes ~ December by Marla Maertin

SILENCE

We are busy. Shopping, baking, wrapping, cooking, working, running to and fro, getting ready for Christmas. Did I buy cinnamon? Did I get a present for my son? Will there be enough room for everyone at our Christmas dinner? Did the Choir understand what they were supposed to do in our last rehearsal?

As crazy as this next sentence sounds, it is a "must-do" at this time of year. Grab an Advent book, your Bible, and sit down (with a cup of chamomile tea) to read what someone has written about the Advent, or waiting, season. Listen to carols and realize that waiting is necessary - for a baby to be born, for our music to be learned, for cookies to be done. We need to focus, in our waiting, on Jesus, who God sent to save us and be like us.

In this Advent season of waiting, we once again place our trust in God who came among us, the Word made flesh, full of grace and truth. God is the One in whom we can trust, the source of our hope and our salvation.

For a musician to encourage **silence** must mean it's important.

For God our souls wait in **silence**.



Music calendar ~

December

3 - 10:30am - Choir warm-up

12:30pm - FHB rehearsal

07 - 6:00pm - H4W rehearsal

7:30pm - Choir rehearsal

10 - 9:00am - H4W warm-up -
no Bell rehearsals!

14 - 6:00pm - H4W rehearsal

7:30pm - Choir rehearsal

17 - 12:30pm - FHB rehearsal

21 - 6:00pm - H4W rehearsal

7:30pm - Choir rehearsal (cake)

24 - 9:00am - H4W warm-up

12:30pm - FHB rehearsal

7:15pm - FHB warm-up

7:30pm - Choir warm-up

31 - 11:00AM - Service of Lessons and
Carols

Out Lynette's Window

If you would like a quietly devout, contemplative Yule Tide season, you will have to go to a cave, up on a mountain or out to sea. Retailers plan 2 and 3 years ahead of time how to squeeze every dime out of you for that one day of the year. We haven't a chance to avoid the blatant commercial bombardment.

My oldest daughter rebelled against this onslaught by limiting her holiday purchases to 3 presents and a stocking for each of her children. "If it was good enough for Jesus, it is good enough for my kids."

Christmas isn't about presents; it is about being present for the remembrance of a baby's birth, so that after death we may have eternal life.

In Sunday School we sing, "Christmas is Jesus' Birthday." Every Christian home I have ever been in at Christmas has a crèche or manger scene on display. How many kids have gotten in trouble for taking baby Jesus away from his straw filled crib? I did. As a child, I thought that wasn't a very nice place for a baby. He was much better off in my doll buggy. Kids can be so literal.

Special decorations, special clothes, once a year special food, all helps us remember how special the remembrance of this birth really is. "For unto us a child is born...." *Isaiah 9:6-7*

JOY TO THE WORLD, indeed!

VBS @ VIVE!!

For the first time ever, First Presbyterian Church of Tonawanda will be offering the Nativity Story to the children of Vivé at Jericho Road Ministries. The children are legal refugees, who have no home except Vivé until they and their families finish the process of becoming citizens. The people in charge were so impressed by our VBS this past summer, that they have asked us to do a Christmas VBS. Many of the children don't know anything about Jesus and this will give them much needed information about Him.



The date for VBS@Vivé is **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16** and the time is from **10AM – NOON**. The children will be making character puppets out of paper bags and will be various characters in the Nativity Story. There will be a game, a snack, and music.

If you would like to be a helper, please sign up on the sheet on the Narthex bulletin board. The Fellowship of God's Word Church will also be participating with us! (and there may even be another Lion Hunt!) The more, the merrier for VBS@Vivé!



Glory Bee

Sunday School Pageant: **“A Very Opinionated Christmas Tree”**
December 17 at 11:00am during worship.

Rehearsals will be done during Sunday School:
~ Nov 26
~ Dec 3
~ Dec 10

Dress Rehearsal: Sunday, Dec 17 during Sunday School.
Snacks will be provided between Sunday School and the Pageant.



Jackson Haacker ~12/5
Benjamin Anthony ~ 12/15



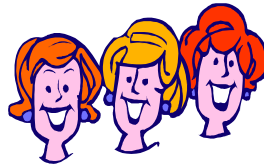
No Sunday School classes
12/24/17 & 12/31/17
Come right back January 7, 2018

Youth Usher: 12/24 at 11am
CE Meeting: 12/12 at 7:00 pm
(please note: Parents & Teachers are always welcome at the meeting)



Christmas Caroling: December 3 at 12 noon.
Pizza and drinks will be served at church for lunch then the carolers will go to DeGraff Skilled Nursing Facility. If you are interested or have questions please contact Sue Schurr @ 531-0421. Everyone is invited to come along and bring some holiday cheer to the residents.

Women's News



Classic Bag Sale:

Saturday, Dec 2

10am-12pm.

Fill a grocery bag for \$2.00.



Please remember items you no longer need are still accepted. Please be sure they are in re-usable and clean condition. Please no electronics. Your help is always appreciated.



You are Invited to attend

The Annual Christmas Tea

December 10, 2017 @ 12:15 PM in the Parlor.

The menu will include:

Tea sandwiches ~ pastries ~ cookies ~ cheese & fruit trays

If you have a favorite tea cup please feel free to bring it with you.

Men are always welcome!

Birthday Fun



Happy Birthday to the members of our Church Family who celebrate their birthday in December 2017.

Thank God for You!

8 Walter Frech
9 Leslie Dugan
16 Brian Smith
28 Michael MacLeod
30 Linda Liberti

Circle II Birthdays

16 Marge Klinger

23 Ina Charsley



Happy Birthday!



A Stephen Ministry Message by Janet Haacker

"During the Christmas season, we often read Isaiah's prophecies of the coming Messiah who would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14) & called '**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**' (9:6). But perhaps we should also include the words of Isaiah 53: "**He was a man of sorrows & familiar with suffering....Surely He took up our infirmities & carried our sorrows.....And by His wounds we are healed**' (vv.3-5). The psalmist reminds us that '**(The Lord) heals the brokenhearted & binds up their wounds**' (Psalm 147:3).

"If you're hurting this Christmas, remember:

"Jesus came to save us, to help us, & to heal us." David McCasland

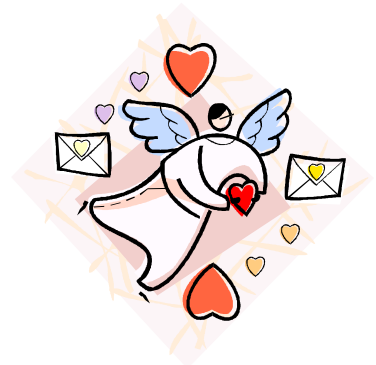
The Stephen Ministers are ready to help you feel God's love for you; to again feel God's closeness like the night of Christ's birth. God sent His Son into our world so that we might know how much He cares for us. So, share your thoughts & feelings with His representative; a non-judgmental, confidential, loving friend that will listen & pray & sit beside you as the **peace** again returns & grows stronger in your heart & life!

For a confidential conversation & more information,
please contact Pastor Leslie (490-0420) or Janet Haacker (694-4290).



Angel Tree Gift Tickets

The Youth will be distributing age-labeled tickets for gifts for needy children. Attach the ticket to the unwrapped gift and place it under the Charlie Brown mitten tree no later than December 17. Please do not spend over \$15.00 for the gift. Monetary donations can also be given to Billy Welch no later than December 17 and the Youth Group will do the shopping for you.



Deacon's Notes



Christmas Poinsettias

Memorial Poinsettias add beauty and joy to our Sanctuary at Christmas while honoring our loved ones. The cost is \$9.00. Forms will be available at a table in the Narthex on December 3 and December 10.

Hunger Sunday ~ December 17

Don't forget that the third Sunday of the month is Hunger Sunday. Food & cash donations are welcome and proceeds are donated to the Twin Cities Community Outreach. Thank you for your support!



Calling All Knitters

Pull out your favorite patterns for hats, mittens and scarves. Our Charlie Brown mitten tree will once again be accepting your beautiful hand made items. Purchased items are desired as well. These warm items will be distributed to needy children in Tonawanda. All items need to be on the tree by December 10.



PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY DRIVE

Our church is one of the drop-off sites for jars of peanut butter, jelly and marshmallow fluff in the Tonawandas. Please help the families in the Twin Cities who don't even have this simple sandwich maker. There are dedicated boxes in the Narthex for your donations.

HEARTS AND HANDS

Sunday, December 10 - CALLING ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL KIDS

Come and make a fun Christmas craft during church. Meet in the back in the Children's Sanctuary right after "Time With Young Disciples" to make this fun craft.

Worship Assistants



Greeters: December

3 Andrea, Ryan & Renee Tasevski
10 Judy Geerkin, Kelsey&Kaitlyn Burns
17 Bill & Janet Bearfield
24 ~ 11am: Haackers
24 ~ 8pm: Joya Palermo
31 John Faux

Liturgists: December

3 Tom Dugan
10 Alvin Marohn
17 Sunday School
24 ~ 11am Diane Charsley
24 ~ 8pm Macintosh Barker
31 Marla Maertin

Ushers: December

3 Mary Ferro, Tom Dugan, Leslie Dugan, John Faux, Linda Barry
10 Randy Marohn, J. William Haley, Bonnie Zimmer, Larry Rayner, John Greth
17 Brian Burns, Diane Charsley, Alvin Maroh, Laura Marohn
24 Youth
31 Mary Ferro, Tom Dugan, Leslie Dugan, John Faux, Linda Barry



Coffee Hour ~ December

3 Janet Haacker
10 PW Tea
17 Bill & Janet Bearfield

**January/February Gazette articles must be in by:
Friday, December 15, 2017 @ 9:00am.**

Announcements for the weekly bulletin must be submitted to the office by Tuesday before Noon , preferably by email, to be included in the following Sunday's bulletin.



December 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Girl Scout Leadership Mtg/ Party 6p UFO 7p	2 Circle II Classic Grocery Bag Sale 10a-12p
3 Advent Worship 8:30a Sunday School 9:30a Choir 10:30a Worship/ Communion 11a FHB 12:30p Christmas Caroling 12:15p	4 A.A. 9a-11a Girl Scouts 6p TOPS 6:30p	5 Adult Bible Study 7p	6	7 A.A. 9a-11a Yoga 6:30-7:30p H4W 6p Choir 7:30p	8 UFO 7p	9
10 Advent Worship 8:30a H4W 9a Sunday School 9:30a Worship 11a Presbyterian Women Tea 12:15p	11 A.A. 9a-11a Girl Scouts 6p TOPS 6:30p	12 CE Mtg 7p Adult Bible Class 7p	13	14 A.A. 9a-11a Yoga 6:30-7:30p H4W 6p Choir 7:30p	15 UFO 7p Youth Christmas Party-7p-10p Youngstown Presbyterian Church	16 VBS at VIVE 10am-12pm (Meet at Church at 9am)
17 Advent Worship 8:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship/SS Christmas Pageant 11a FHB 12:30p Blue Christmas Service 4p	18 A.A. 9a-11a Girl Scouts 6p TOPS 6:30p	19 Adult Bible Class 7p	20 Healing Service 6:30p	21 A.A. 9a-11a Yoga 6:30-7:30p H4W 6p Choir 7:30p (Cake)	22 UFO 7p	23
24 Advent Worship 8:30a H4W 9:30a Usher/Server Mtg 10a Worship 11a FHB 7p Choir 7:30p Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship 8PM	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS Office Closed	26	27	28 A.A. 9a-11a Yoga 6:30-7:30p GS Leadership Mtg 8p	29 UFO 7p	30
31 Worship 11a Service of Lessons & Carols	Notes:					



Elders

Class of 2018

Nancy Rolando, Shirley Hagle, Sue Schurr, Laura Marohn

Class of 2019

Linda Barry, Diane Charsley

Class of 2020

Betsy Crocker, Tom Dugan

Deacons

Class of 2018

J. William Haley, Theresa Rayner

Class of 2019

Donna Blinston, Jane Crossan, Leslie Dugan, Roderick MacLeod, Lynette Ryan

Class of 2020

Judy Geerkin, Alvin Marohn, Marlene Tyrrell

First Presbyterian Church

149 Broad Street

Tonawanda, NY 14150-2111

Phone: (716) 692-1319

E-mail: church@firstprestona.org

Web address: www.firstprestona.org

DATED MATERIAL
Good News Gazette
December 2017
