

## An Advent Meditation

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Advent is the time of year that we reflect on Jesus Christ's first coming into the world as a babe and anticipate Christ's second coming into the world as Lord and King. Upon Christ's second coming, God's justice will finally take place and all that is broken and wrong in creation will be made right as God's kingdom is fully and finally established on earth as it is in heaven. We pray, especially in the time of Advent, **"Come, Lord Jesus, Come."**

I'd like to offer you the following meditation; a way to pray this prayer in an intentional way over this Advent season to help open each of us up to ways that the Spirit seeks to work in and through us in the power of Jesus Christ. Begin by quieting yourself, doing your best to focus your thoughts on God and to remove from your mind and heart the distractions of the world. Ask the Holy Spirit to be present in

this time, guiding your thoughts and prayers and drawing you into the loving presence of the Triune God. As you begin to pray, **"Come, Lord Jesus, Come,"** prayerfully ask the following question(s):

**Lord Jesus, as you come to me today, what is it that you desire to make right...**

**...in my life? ...in my family?  
...in my church? ...in my community? ...in my world?**

As you prayerfully ask each question, pause and take several minutes to simply listen, allowing the Lord to speak His desires to your heart. Write in a journal the things that you are sensing God placing on your heart.

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## Middle School Property



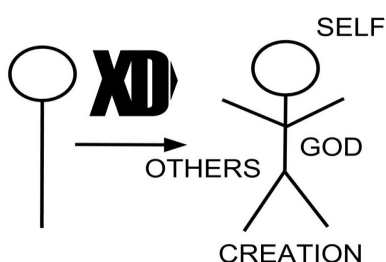
I was asked by our Finance Ministry Team and Session to give the congregation a brief update on the future of the Middle School property. For those who were not in worship on November 15, here is a summary of what I shared with the congregation on that day:

As a landlocked, downtown church we are interested in trying to acquire the Middle School property. This might be our only chance to secure adjacent property. There are at least three primary reasons that we should seek to acquire

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## CCO AshlandXD

Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO) has partnered with FPC to challenge college students here at Ashland University to live out their faith in every area of life. (There are *On Campus* magazines in narthex if you would like to understand CCO ministry better.) The unique ministry way we are doing this here at Ashland is through Experiential Designs, better known as XD. XD is a department of CCO. We are designing outreach oriented trips and opportunities to position students for growth and transformation in Christ.



So what is XD and why are we doing trips like the Adirondack Fall Break Trip? We desire to bring awareness and an awakening to the interconnectedness of these four relationships: Self, God, Creation and Others. We design and facilitate the trips to use all the elements, the environment, the activities, “EVERY AREA” of the trip to speak into and form the students in Christ. True Authentic Re-Creation.

Taylor Randle



Here are some quotes from students that give testimony to what Christ is up to on these trips:

**Can you articulate any transformation that happened in you as a result of going on this trip?**

*“I realized that the problems I need to be dealing with cannot come from me healing me. I need to use the people around me to help in my healing. Because of this trip I would like to bring life to my vulnerability.”*

*-Taylor Randles*

*“Not quite yet. I think it was a catalyst to take control of my life. It was kind of like I was using fall break to scream, “STOP!!” to everything in my life and enter into slow motion for a while so I could figure out what in the heck is happening in my life.”*

*-Logan Imber*

**How has your relationship with God been shaped from this trip?**

*I have committed to spending more time with God on a daily basis. -Nick M.*

*“It’s getting there, closer than it was in the beginning of the trip.” -Sarah G*

**Thank you for all those that gave scholarship money to make this trip a possibility for every student!**



Adrienne, Jake, Taylor, Nick, Sarah, Logan, Kouri, Natasha, Zane

# Birthdays



## DECEMBER

4th Amira Boswell  
 5th Donna Harrop  
 6th Betty Garrett  
 10th Jacqueline Blasdel  
 Alys Frcka  
 Dottie Tennis  
 12th June Etzwiler  
 Roslyn Lerback  
 Harold Seifert  
 13th Isabel Brinker  
 Sean DeLong  
 Sydney Webb  
 15th Tony Smetana  
 16th Teresa Hudson  
 Jolynn Lopeman  
 21st Jim Hooker  
 26th Bill Latham  
 Helen McClellan  
 27th Andrew Lerback  
 28th Alex Jarvis  
 29th Brett Miller  
 31st Lucille Ford

## JANUARY

7th Elizabeth Richmond  
 8th Al Holdren  
 10th Tom Mason  
 13th Robert Beer  
 Zane Blasdel  
 14th Michael Hudson  
 15th JoAnne Kash  
 20th Dean McBurney  
 24th Faye Baum  
 26th Gabriella Carver  
 29th Sloan Brune  
 James Shilling  
 30th Kaitlynn Barnett  
 Amanda Robles

## FEBRUARY

5th Anne Downs  
 Matt Paullin  
 Debbie Reidy  
 7th Janice Carr  
 8th Carroll Schweyer  
 9th Bonnie Manos  
 11th Tommy Foley  
 Jane Sponsler  
 12th Bill Dravenstott  
 18th Dorita Ramage  
 19th Shawn Steere  
 21st Aaron Mason  
 Josiah Mason  
 Jean Mason  
 26th Lana Potter



## Poinsettia Order Form



In Loving Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I/We will take my poinsettia after December 24.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please deliver my poinsettia to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please deliver my poinsettia to a shut-in or person in need.

Please return this order form by Sunday, December 13th with your donation to either the church office or place it in the offering plate. Checks should be made payable to the First Presbyterian Church and please put "poinsettia" on the memo line. One form per poinsettia, please. Thank you for your donation.



# Financial Reports

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FINANCE REPORT - OCTOBER 2015

<u>Contributions/Receipts</u>	<u>OCT. 2014</u> <u>YTD</u>	<u>BUDGET 2015</u> <u>YTD</u>	<u>OCT. 2015</u> <u>YTD</u>
Pledges	\$162,514.50	\$141,666.70	\$141,382.00 *
Non-Pledged Contributions	\$22,966.07	\$54,166.70	\$36,941.20
Loose Offering	\$4,290.95	\$5,000.00	\$4,095.67
Prior Year Pledges	\$1,247.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,525.00
Church Use Donations	\$350.00	\$833.30	\$825.00
Whiting Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ACCF – Program	\$10,960.75	\$13,000.00	\$10,952.85
ACCF – Building	\$5,116.75	\$6,500.00	\$5,505.75
ACCF - Mission	\$1,860.00	\$2,500.00	\$1,949.75
Interest/Investment Income	\$87.21	\$70.80	(\$749.72)
Miscellaneous Income	\$3,272.69	\$3,750.00	\$2,308.67
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$212,665.92</b>	<b>\$232,487.50</b>	<b>\$208,736.17</b>
<u>Expenses</u>			
Personnel	\$158,600.50	\$172,076.64	\$168,887.45
Health Insurance	\$11,135.80	\$11,861.70	\$11,862.10
Property	\$29,920.01	\$18,604.10	\$12,176.95
Property Insurance	\$6,702.00	\$6,750.00	\$6,667.00
Utilities	\$19,753.52	\$18,566.70	\$17,276.02
Finance	\$247.22	\$291.60	\$42.00
Per capita assessment	\$5,124.77	\$5,019.00	\$5,019.00
Session Expenses	\$352.86	\$1,000.00	\$1,010.88
Worship/Music	\$1,011.32	\$1,301.80	\$1,202.38
Office	\$7,089.14	\$9,416.70	\$6,899.06
Discipleship	\$3,897.89	\$1,854.20	\$2,343.02
Pioneer Club	\$89.06	\$833.30	\$209.39
Stephen Ministry	\$51.47	\$500.00	\$0.00
Mid Week Gathering	\$0.00	\$833.30	\$0.00
Formational Prayer/Training		\$833.30	\$500.00
College-Aged Ministry	\$1,927.31		
Mission /Giving /Support		\$11,416.70	\$11,500.00
DEACONS			
Invite	\$10,317.63	\$833.30	\$0.00
Connect	\$3,182.46	\$4,583.40	\$2,833.42
Send	\$1,790.46	\$5,000.00	\$1,436.72
Deacons - Miscellaneous	\$2,277.80	\$833.30	\$924.73
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$263,471.22</b>	<b>\$272,409.04</b>	<b>\$250,790.12</b>
<b>EXCESS INCOME / EXPENSES</b>	<b>(\$50,805.30)</b>	<b>(\$39,921.54)</b>	<b>(\$42,053.95)</b>

\* Includes Prepaid pledges of \$22,433.76

*FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*  
**Balance Sheet (UNAUDITED)**  
 Consolidated - October 2015

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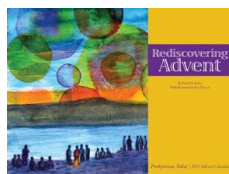
	Current Year
<hr/>	
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>CASH ACCOUNTS</b>	
Sutton Bank Checking Acct	\$3.83
Janney Montgomery Scott	113,379.29
PayPal	5,611.50
Subtotal Cash Accounts	118,994.62
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><u>\$118,994.62</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	
200th Campaign Fund	\$15,248.88
CCO - College Ministry	550.00
Memorial & Special Gifts	
Nancy Donley Estate	17,250.82
Rex & Jean Robbins Mem.	797.00
Organ maint. Liability a/c	99.37
Kitchen maint. Liab. a/c	708.18
Subtotal Memorial & Special Gifts	18,855.37
Special Mission Gifts	
Associated Charities	10.00
Presb. Mother's Study	20.00
Youth Ministry	
ACCF - Johnson	2,188.09
Subtotal Current Liabilities	36,872.34
<b>WITHHELD PAYROLL TAXES</b>	
F.I.C.A.	532.31
Medicare	124.46
Federal Income Tax	434.10
State Income Tax	160.14
City Income Tax	128.64
Employer's Share FICA	532.31
Employer's Share Medicare	124.46
Subtotal Withheld Payroll Taxes	2,036.42
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u>38,908.76</u>
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>	
Fund Balance	\$80,085.86
<b>TOTAL FUND BALANCE</b>	<u>80,085.86</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>	<u><u>\$118,994.62</u></u>

**Includes collections of \$200,920.02 for the 200 for 200 campaign & expenses paid of \$185,671.14 for a net amount available of \$15,248.88.**

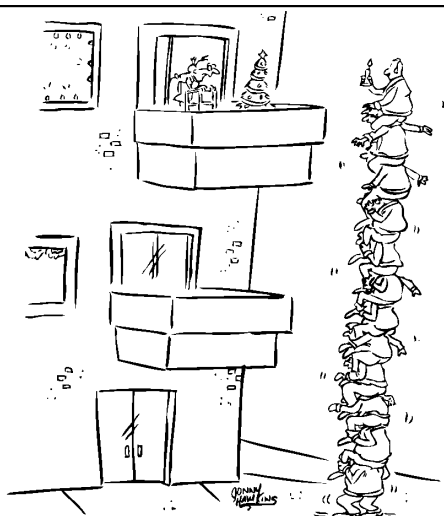
## Stewardship Campaign 2016

Stewardship campaign information for 2016 along with pledge cards was mailed out a couple weeks ago. As of 11-14-2015, the church received 31 pledges with a total amount pledged of \$89,682.00. The letter you received asked that pledges be returned by Sunday, November 15th. If you are planning to pledge for 2016, I encourage you to get your pledge information in to the church office as soon as possible, as we will be starting to prepare the budget for 2016. Many of you contribute faithfully and regularly to the church, but do not make a pledge. On behalf of the church, I would like to thank all of you for your contributions to the church. It is because of you that we are able to work to carry out the mission of our church.

Peggy Yoder, Treasurer



*Rediscovering Advent*, an Advent Calendar/Devotional by Rachel M. Srubas, is available in the narthex. This is a gift to you.



Cass Park Church's carolers were always ready to make necessary adjustments.

## 200 *for* 200

### Campaign Update

This past Sunday was Celebration Sunday, and we do have something to celebrate regarding the finances of the church.

Last year in honor of the 200th anniversary, we conducted the 200 for 200 campaign with a goal of raising \$200,000 to provide funding for heating, lighting and audio/visual projects and updates for the church.

The total amount pledged for the 200 for 200 campaign was \$210,041.02. As of 11-14-2015, \$201,265.02 of the pledged amount was collected. This leaves an outstanding pledged balance of \$8,776.00. This campaign runs through December of this year, so I would encourage you to get any balance you might owe or want to contribute in by the end of the year.

Of the \$201,265.02 collected, \$185,671.14 has been spent on the heating, lighting and visual projects/updates. This leaves a net amount currently available of \$15,593.88. With the collection of the outstanding amount of \$8,776.00, this would make approximately \$24,000 available toward the audio portion of the project.

Once again, I sincerely thank you on behalf of the entire church for your faithfulness and support of the campaign and the life and mission of our church. Thank you!

Peggy Yoder, Treasurer

## Christmas Joy Offering “Promises Made Promises Kept”

The promise of salvation was kept with the birth of Jesus. May we be found as faithful.

Our gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering will provide:

- Support for church workers through assistance in their time of need: income supplement grants, housing supplement grants, shared grants, emergency assistance grants
- Development and education of racial ethnic leadership for the future of our church: Menaul School, Presbyterian Pan American School, Stillman College

Detailed information about benefits of Christmas Joy Offering gifts will be found in bulletin inserts during Advent. Please read prayerfully as you consider sharing from your resources. Special envelopes for this offering are in the pews. Giving catalogs are located on the mission bulletin board in the hall adjacent to the narthex.

There are three ways to give:

- through this congregation via the offering plate or our website
- by texting JOY to 20222 to give \$10
- or by visiting [prebyterianmission.org/give/christmas-joy](http://prebyterianmission.org/give/christmas-joy)



Mike and FPC Ashland Family,

Thank You for your partnership with CCO and joining Jake in ministry to students at Ashland. With Christ, it is amazing to see lives transformed. You are a blessing. Thank You.

Thank you for helping us to bring the salvation of Jesus Christ to the next generation. Happy Thanksgiving from the CCO.

Grace and Peace,  
Mike Mattes, Ohio Director of CCO

## Mission Ministry

FPC supports Keith Pepsny in his work with the Navigators. The Navigators is a worldwide Christian para-church organization whose purpose is the discipling of Christians with a particular emphasis on enabling them to share their faith with others. Keith, who is Al and Sabrina Pepsny's son, works with students at the University of Washington. He wrote this note as he was beginning four Bible discussions on campus:

Hi First Presby Missions Committee,  
We just noticed your giving for this year. Thank you so much! It give us great joy to have you as our home church in Ashland. We are very encouraged with what God is doing at the University of Washington and in Seattle. This might be our best fall start in the four years we've lived here. We've prayerfully and patiently invested in the few, and they are now beginning to invest in others.

Please pray that those men and women would "be rooted and established in their faith" and that the gospel would graciously advance (in word and deed) for those they interact with, especially with those in their fraternities and sororities.

Grateful,  
Keith (and Kate)



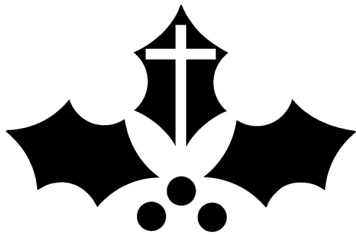
To all at the First Presbyterian Church,

Thank You! so very much for the duffle bags! They are wonderful and it's so nice to know that a child in need will have such a wonderful bag to keep their belongings!

Traci Foley,  
Ashland County Job and Family Services



## Worship Services



### Christmas Eve:

7:00pm A blended worship with choir, praise band, and candlelight

11:00pm A traditional worship with Communion by intinction and candlelight

FPC encourages families to worship together; the nursery will not be staffed for either Christmas Eve service.

### December 27:

10:00am Lessons and Carols



**ACCESS**  
Our next week  
to host is  
January 3–10  
at Peace  
Lutheran Church

## Presby Lunch Bunch December 15

The Presby Lunch Bunch will have their annual Christmas Luncheon on Tuesday, December 15 in the Accent Room at Ashland University.

Please make reservations with Cora Walker no later than December 13. The group welcomes anyone who enjoys fellowship and good food. During our December luncheon we will be planning January and February lunch activities.



## Church Closings and Cancellations:

Please tune into WNCO FM 101.3 or AM 1340 for news of cancellations due to weather. It will also be listed on their websites and any of the other Clear Channel stations in the area.



Our church website will also list any closings on our home page

**[www.ashlandfpc.org](http://www.ashlandfpc.org)**

### Holiday Office Schedule:

Friday, December 11  
office is closed

Friday, December 18  
office is closed

Thursday, December 24  
office open until 12:00pm

Friday, December 25  
office is closed

Thursday, December 31  
office is open until 12:00pm

Friday, January 1  
office is closed



# »» Odds & Ends ««

Thursday, December 31  
is the last day  
the church can accept  
contributions for 2015.  
The office will close  
at noon on that day.

Per Capita for 2016 is \$28.73.

The church no longer has a fax machine.  
Documents can be emailed to and from the church.



# December

## First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 8:00pm AA	2 9:30am Bible Study Session Packet Info Due 7:30pm Choir	3 10:00am Finance Ministry Team 1:30pm Organ Tuning	4	5 8:30am Presbytery Meeting/ Journey Discovery 4 @ College Dr. PC, New Concord
6 Advent II Hunger Sunday	7	8 1:00pm Bridge 6:30pm Session 6:30pm Deacons 8:00pm AA	9 9:30am Bible Study 7:30pm Choir	10 5:00pm PMS to Holiday Hoopla @ Shadowbox	11 Church Office Closed	12
13 Advent III 11:00am Wassail Reception	14 Monthly Newsletter Deadline	15 11:30am Presby Lunch Bunch @ AU Accent Room 8:00pm AA	16 9:30am Bible Study 7:30pm Choir	17 9:00am Staff 10:00am Carpet Cleaning 11:00am Worship Ministry Team	18 Church Office Closed	19
20 Advent IV 2:15pm Worship @ Kingston	21	22 7:00pm Leadership Essentials 8:00pm AA	23 9:30am Bible Study 7:30pm Choir	24 Christmas Eve 12:00pm Church Office Closed 7:00pm Worship 11:00pm Worship with Communion	25 Christmas Church Office Closed	26
27	28	29 8:00pm AA	30 9:30am Bible Study	31 New Year's Eve 12:00pm Church Office Closed		

# January

## First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Office Closed— New Year's Day	2 Office Closed
3 Host ACCESS  Hunger Sunday	4 Host ACCESS	5 Host ACCESS  8:00pm AA	6 Host ACCESS Session Packet Info Due 9:30am Bible Study 7:30pm Choir	7 Host ACCESS	8 Host ACCESS	9 Host ACCESS
10	11	12 1:00pm Bridge  6:30pm Session 6:30pm Deacons 8:00pm AA	13 9:30am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	14	15  6:30pm Movie Night	16
17	18 Office Closed- MLK Day	19  8:00pm AA	20 9:30am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	21	22	23
24	25 Monthly Newsletter Deadline	26  8:00pm AA	27 9:30am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	28	29	30
31						

# February

First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Session Packet Info Due  9:30am Bible Study  8:00pm AA  7:30pm Choir	4	5	6
7  Hunger Sunday	8	9  1:00pm Bridge  6:30pm Session 6:30pm Deacons 8:00pm AA	10 Ash Wednesday  9:30am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	11	12	13
14	15  President's Day Office Closed	16  8:00pm AA	17  9:30am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	18	19  6:30pm Movie Night	20
21	22  Quarterly Newsletter Deadline	23  8:00pm AA	24  9:30am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	25	26	27
28	29					

## Flash from the Past, 1967

During our church clean up day this last August, our workers came across a collection of bulletins. Here are some historical highlights from 1967 with thanks to Martie Casciani for reviewing the old bulletins:

March 3: By action of the congregation at last Sunday's meeting, there is now established an Organ Fund. Anyone wishing to give a special gift to this fund may do so by marking it Organ Fund and sending it to the trustees in care of the church office.

April 23: The beautiful new display cabinet in the narthex was given in memory of Mrs. Elzie E. Armstrong by Mr. Armstrong.

May 14: Members of the Jr. High Fellowship are on their Go-See Trip to Niagara Falls this weekend. Rev. & Mrs. Ramage, Mr. & Mrs. Karl Swartz of Mifflin Ave. are with the group of thirty young people.



May 21: The communion linen, being used for the first time today, was given in loving memory of Mrs. Mary Ferguson Wertman by the Good Will Class.

August 6: To our new pastor, the Reverend Frederick P. Gibbs, his wife, Judith, and 20-month-old son, Frederick William, we extend a cordial welcome. They are now moved into the manse at 400 Sandusky Street.

October 8: Annual Deacons' Chicken Barbecue will be Friday, October 13, from 4:00—7:00 in Fellowship Hall. Charges are \$1.50 for adults and 75¢ for children ten years and younger. Come and bring your friends. Everyone is invited. Donations of pies and cakes will be greatly appreciated.

October 25: Three coaches are needed for our Presbyterian basketball teams. The teams being organized are for men, boys 15-18 years of age, and younger boys. Substitutes are also needed for the Tuesday night bowling team. Please contact Gary Carr.



FPC is looking to hire someone from outside the church to serve as our Nursery Coordinator. Candidates must be 18 years or older and submit to a background check. The coordinator would work three hours on Sunday mornings and 2—2.5 hours on Wednesday nights when Oasis occurs. This is a paid position. Candidates can email [office@ashlandfpc.org](mailto:office@ashlandfpc.org) or call the office at 419-298-6205.



Veronica Mae Dravenstott was born in August to Ron and Kelly. Ron is the youngest son of Bill and Connie Dravenstott.

## A Special Thank You

A BIG thank you to Paullin Sealcoating for sealing our parking lot recently. Matt Paullin has been keeping a eye on our parking lot, checking to see when it needed to be sealed. Thanks to Matt and sister, Michelle Amstutz for their service to us.



## Prayer Shawl Winter Project

We are looking for people who knit or crochet who would like to help make prayer shawls.



Please contact Brenda Luttrell for more information.  
419-289-8168.



## Prayer

Happy Thanksgiving! How interesting life can be! I have a new breakfast companion who is eight. He landed on my doorstep in a very unpredictable way. His father had done some work for me and he lost his babysitter. Since his father needs to be at work at 5:30am, Caleb now comes at 4:30am, naps until it's time for breakfast and then we get ready for school. Well, I wasn't sure I wanted to do this initially, but while he was here, God spoke to me through a toy bank. While playing, Caleb discovered a bank I have that has a BIG whale and a fishing boat with Jonah. I thought about how Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh and how God had other plans for him. God usually wins and it is more joyful to say, "Yes" at the beginning rather than try to resist, run away, or complain. I thought



about the character of Wizard in the movie, *August Rush*, we saw during a recent church Movie Night. Robin Williams played a man who was missing out on the Kingdom. He heard the "music," but he had a hard heart and didn't let the "music" transform him. His resentment and bitterness spilled out into others in his path. He took advantage of and bullied young boys because he was angry inside. But there were others in the movie who did find the Kingdom. They kept seeking and God, in His goodness, helped them. How many times do we miss out on God's joy? God is faithful and patient. He wants us to find the keys to His Kingdom. If we continue to look, He

promises we will find. Like Wizard, we may be caught up in things we don't want to do. What is the solution? Decide that we DO want to do that which God has given for us to do right now. Then in doing, listen for the "music" (pray). God can change dull leaves into beautiful reds, oranges and yellows. He can change stone hearts like the one Saul had before he became Paul. Paul had been seeking. He just got the message twisted. God can do the impossible when we call upon him and allow him into our hearts. So how do we find the Key to the Kingdom? Call upon Him. Seek Him and ask. Be persistent. He will help you find. It's a promise.

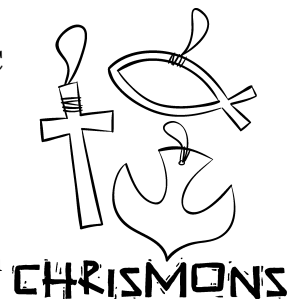
Heavenly Father and Initiator of the impossible, we call on You for wisdom. Help us to see the conditions we share with the character Wizard, where darkness clouds our perceptions and habit predicts our response. We pray that You open our ears to the "music" and allow it to transform us. Be strength in our weakness. Help us never lose hope. Help us find those keys to Your kingdom and open our hearts, and say "Yes"...we pray in the precious yet powerful Name of Jesus...amen and amen.

Sharing God's love,  
Jolynn Lopeman

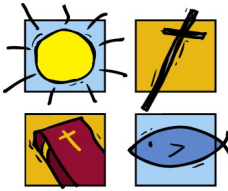
## Chrismons

Last year our faithful cross-stitchers created the 25th and final FPC Chrismon ornament. They still have some of the past ornaments as well as patterns for all of them. They are willing, within reason, to make Chrismons upon request this year if you have a few missing from your collection. Please contact Brenda Luttrell for more information.

Recently, this ornament team mailed the final FPC ornament with our circle logo on it to past ministers of this congregation. They thanked them for their service, their contribution to our 200 years as a congregation.



## Children's Ministry



The Atrium children had a heart yearning to connect with the congregation now that the children are not in worship because their Atrium experience occurs at the same time as worship. Tia and the children decided to host a time together to celebrate members of our congregation. Together they prayed over the directory to discern whom to invite and also what food to serve and what questions to ask. Here are some responses to that time together:

October 18th Walt and I, along with others, were invited to celebrate with Tia's class in the lounge. We enjoyed good food and wonderful fellowship as everyone shared stories about faith and life. We prayed together and even shared favorite scripture. The children shared verses they had learned. God gave us all a love and respect for one another. Thank you, Tia and class.

- Walt and Dorita Ramage

How quickly both kids and adults responded to their favorite Bible verse! The kids asked how old were the adults when they first knew Jesus. The kids had lots of questions and conversations!

- Dean McBurney

Sharing fellowship, conversation, and prayer with our children participating in the Sunday morning Atrium activities was a special blessing. In addition to talking about our favorite colors, favorite pets, and favorite Bible verses, each child had made a small gift for each adult as a remembrance of our time together. How patiently our young friends waited while we adults chose refreshments, a wonderful experience of hospitality.

- Lana Potter

### Warm Fuzzy Tree

The Warm Fuzzy Tree is located in the Narthex and ready to receive hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, etc. All donations will be delivered to Associated Charities.



## Children's Outreach Project



*Building a better world for children*

During the Wassail reception following worship on December 13, our children will host a fund-raiser project to support World Vision. A high level of excitement is filling these children as they desire to provide tangible means to help a family or community in a Third World country. (For detailed information about World Vision's mission and activities, please check their website.) As you enjoy refreshments and fellowship, stop by their display and share in their enthusiasm. The amount of donations received will help determine whether they can purchase an animal for a needy family, contribute to a community's safe water supply, purchase school supplies, whatever a specific need may be. A receipt will be provided for your donation, if you desire. Thank you in advance for your role in helping our children celebrate the ability to reach out to others in need.

Blessings, Tia Sponsler,  
Director of Children's Ministry

### Young Life

Every year God uses the Young Life banquet to make us stop and savor everything He's done over the past year. Processing it all is hard enough, but trying to articulate the miracles we've seen and been a part of in the lives of kids and leaders, Committee members and donors, not to mention ourselves is overwhelming. We are so grateful for everyone who had a hand in this past year's banquet, which was held on November 9. It was an incredible evening; exciting, exhausting, encouraging, and humbling all at the same time. The highlight of the entire thing was seeing how many table hosts jumped at the opportunity to bring their friends. To date it was the largest attendance we've had at a Young Life banquet, and we raised \$23,000 in new monies. For us it was a tangible reminder that this ministry is community owned and operated. Homegrown people. Homegrown kids. Homegrown change... And yes, we do have the best jobs in the world.

Matt McClain

## Passport to Entertainment and Enrichment

Boice, James Montgomery. *The Christ of Christmas*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2009.

The late Presbyterian pastor, James Montgomery Boice, was a lover of Christmas. However, in the Preface to *The Christ of Christmas* he admits that, especially in later years, having preached so many Christmas sermons, he wondered whether he would be able to preach another, on that would contain “anything new or even interesting” for his congregation. But he did and he compiled his ideas into *The Christ of Christmas*.

The author says that the traditional Christmas story as related in Luke and Matthew is beautiful and sentimental but he asks whether we have ever heard it from Christ Himself. Although not found in the New Testament His words are quoted from Psalm 40 in the tenth chapter of Hebrews. That writer cites, “Therefore, when Christ came into this world, he said: ... ‘Here I am—it is written about me on the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God.’” (Heb 10:5,7). No other child has ever known from birth the reason for being born.

In subsequent chapters Boice discusses the virgin birth which is still debated in contemporary times and the genealogies of Christ. In another chapter he outlines and discusses the many paradoxes contained in the Christmas story. The overriding one is the Incarnation itself. The Lord was born in a stable, not in a palace and His birth was announced to shepherds who occupied the lowest rung on society’s ladder. There was no room at the inn, yet Christ says that there are many rooms for us in His Father’s house. He was a member of a human family so that we can become the children of God. The list of contrasts continues.

“How to Celebrate Christmas” is the title of Boice’s next-to-last chapter. He goes to the story of the Nativity in the New Testament and says that Christians should do four things that are found there. They should share the Good News with others, examine the wonder of the event, meditate on its meaning, and praise and glorify God for Christ’s birth.

*The Christ of Christmas* presents interesting, thought-provoking aspects that we usually don’t consider when we read the account of the Nativity in the Scriptures or hear it read.

- Beverly Bixler

### An Advent Meditation continued from p.1

Don’t rush; take your time. Pray, listen, and enjoy being in God’s presence. As your time in prayer comes to a close thank God for meeting you and ask God to give you the strength to act upon those things that God places upon your heart.

You might ask one of these questions each day of the week, or you might ask each question every day. Regardless, I invite you to engage in this practice every day throughout the season of Advent. Perhaps you will notice that a consistent theme will arise and you’ll begin to have confidence that this is the voice of the Lord speaking to you. Ask yourself this question: **Is this theme biblical? Is it supported by the Scriptures?** If so, then you can gain confidence that God is laying upon you God’s will and desire for each of these areas of your life. This can then guide your prayers for your own life, for the lives of your loved ones, for our church, our community, and our world. To the extent of your gifts and influence, this can become your way of service to the Lord as you (and I!) seek to be faithful to God’s call on our lives.

I pray that you will take up this practice in the weeks to come. I pray that Jesus will indeed come to you and that you will experience the presence of the Lord in new and profound ways. I would love to hear how God uses this practice in your life! Don’t hesitate to share your stories with me. In the meantime, **“Come, Lord Jesus, Come.”**

In Christ’s Love,  
*Pastor Mike*



## Middle School Property

### continued from p.1

the property. First, the parking lot to the west of our building is a part of the Middle School property. Should another entity acquire the parking lot, we would have no control as to how they might choose to use that property, nor could we guarantee that we would be granted permission to park in the lot on Sunday mornings.

Our second area of interest lies in the possibility of acquiring "green space," a current need for our congregation. The area to the north of our building will be all green space that we could begin using immediately for children's ministry and church functions while we prayerfully discern how the space might be used as a blessing to both our congregation and the community surrounding us.

Finally, we learned a couple years ago through conversations with architects and design engineers that it would be significantly less expensive to add on to our current building than to do extensive remodeling of our current building. While there have been needs to make permanent improvements to our building (for example – handicap restrooms, a gathering/welcome space, and handicap accessibility to all areas of our building, just to name a few), we have been waiting to see if we might be able to acquire the Middle School property in order to be good stewards of our resources and so that we could open up all feasible options of design to meet our needs in the most effective and efficient way.

At this time, it is anticipated that the Middle School property will be auctioned late this coming

spring. It was originally thought to be auctioned around Thanksgiving. They will be auctioning the property in two parcels. One parcel will be the parking lot; the other parcel will be the property to the north of the alley directly behind the church. Each parcel will be auctioned to the highest bidder, and then the properties will be combined and auctioned as one parcel to see with method brings in the most money for the school district. We have had a great team of people working diligently to help us prepare ourselves to be at the auction with the hopes of bidding on and purchasing the property. While our hope would be to not have to assume debt to purchase the property, plans are being made to secure funds so that we can be prepared on the day of the auction. Should we need to take out a loan we would do so with a plan to pay back the funds as quickly as possible so that the debt will not hinder the life and ministry of the congregation. We will do our best to keep the congregation informed as we gain more information about the pending auction.

Please be in prayer for discernment over this situation. Pray that God will clear the path to help us acquire the property in a way that speaks to the godly stewardship with which we seek to function. We have had a couple people ask us if we were receiving donations towards this effort, as there might be interest in making contributions by year end. Yes, we are taking contributions toward this effort. Should we not be successful in acquiring this property, any funds that were earmarked for this project will then be put towards permanent improvements on our current building. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Peggy Yoder, treasurer.

*Pastor Mike*

Harvest  
Dinner  
Kitchen Crew  
November 15,  
2015





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**Winter 2015-2016**



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## Presby Lunch Bunch at O'Bryans

November 17, 2015

