

# The Good News

Blessed People of God,

As the air turns crisp and the leaves crunch under our feet, the words of Isaiah lead us into a season of Thanksgiving, Hope and Incarnation: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined... For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Is 9:2,6)

When God's people were lost in a world filled with war and chaos, God was not satisfied to continue raising up leader after leader, offering momentary conquest or victory for just one nation or season. So, God offered God's own self, God's own being to the world—Jesus, God in human form who came to be a Savior to all for all time.

And in Jesus' life he invited us to walk with him and receive from him God's own holy Spirit that would guide us and include us in creating joy, peace, abundance and hope on this side of heaven. In faith, people followed Jesus. The bible describes crowds and followers of Jesus as "healed" from whatever earthly malady afflicted them—disease, disability, loneliness, bitterness, resentments and long-held injuries.

The light of God that came in and with Jesus was a healing light. And from that time on, people have been trading in their misery for peace and satisfaction as they surrender their pain to make more room for being touched by God, loved and healed. Have you been touched by God? Have you turned your life over to Christ? Are you actively listening and following God's Holy Spirit?

These may seem like absurd questions in a church newsletter mailed to church people—God's people, believers in Jesus. And yet, in this approaching Advent season of redemption, as we are all called to remember the darkness before the light and invited to enter into the light of Christ, these seem like good questions that have the power to reset our faith. Have you been touched by God? Have you turned your life over to Christ? Are you actively listening and following God's Holy Spirit?

We all have something we can hand over to God. We all have something in need of healing. I don't know anyone too full of hope or too joyous, there can always be more grace. And I know many believers who



embrace the loving and believing part of their faith, yet, struggle with the listening and surrendering and following part—especially when they're in a pinch or need some help. But this is the season of redemption and hope for all.



FOR UNTO YOU  
IS BORN THIS DAY  
IN THE CITY OF DAVID  
A SAVIOR  
WHICH IS  
*Christ the Lord.*

LUKE 2:11

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As we prepare for the coming of the Christ-child once again, this is the time to reset and begin again. For God is here, God is with us on our journey. And if you're needing human hearts and hands to support you in your journey, please speak up and turn to your fellow believers, especially our church elders.

Our session of Elders has long practiced spiritual formation to become not only good stewards and leaders of the church, but spiritual leaders as well—people who are looking for God and discerning God's presence and will. And recently, we, as your session, have made a greater commitment to being spirit-filled leaders who recognize that God is *already* at work in the world (in ways too numerous to count), and we are simply aiming to *join in* what God is already doing. Yet, to accomplish this "joining in" we need to be attentive listeners and notice where God is, what God is doing, and, perhaps, be willing to change our plans and join in!

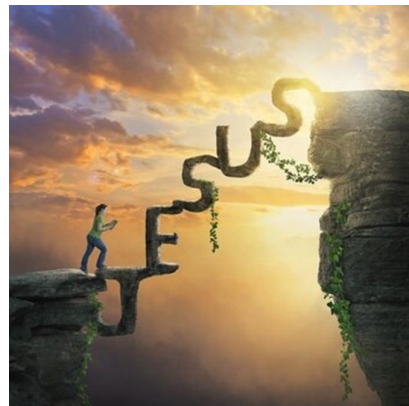
Listening and noticing and following God is a "back to basics" life of faith. It's also a good reset point—for our church leaders and church members alike. In the coming months, you will hear more about how we're doing in our listening, noticing and following the Holy Spirit, but suffice it to say, we'd like *you* to join us! This isn't a journey we are travelling alone and we believe that **all** of God's people are called to join in what God is *already* doing around us.

Are you ready for a spiritual reset? Do you know that God has *already* gifted you with spiritual gifts? Do you know that you are not only needed, but necessary in God's plan for peace, joy, love and hope on this side of heaven?

When God's people had lost hope or lost their way, Isaiah assured them of God's abiding presence with them and said to them, "When you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" (*Is 30:21*) Beloved people of God, as we anticipate the coming of God in Christ at Christmas, believe and receive God's redeeming spirit today, for this is the way, walk in it!

Blessed Christmas,

Becky



# Christmas Concert

December 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 4:00 pm  
in the SCPC Sanctuary

The Sounds of Pittsburgh Chorus, an award winning a cappella women's chorus, and special guests Sapphire Sound women's quartet, will present a concert at 4:00 pm on December 3, at Sharon Community Presbyterian Church.

The Deacons will a reception after the performance.

Musical selections will include many holiday and Christmas favorites as well as some popular songs we love to sing.





# Advent at Sharon Church



## An Advent Service of Healing and Hope

Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>  
@ 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

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## A Service of Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>  
@ 10:30 a.m.  
In the Sanctuary



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## Christmas Eve: A Festival of Music & Worship & Christmas Tea

Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> @ 10:30 a.m.



We will be sharing the light of Christ  
at this service and rejoicing in the  
Incarnation of the Lord.

After worship, the Deacons will  
be hosting a Christmas Tea—replete  
with tea sandwiches, desserts, punch  
and Christmas cheer.

# Worship News



## Advent Decorating in the Sanctuary

**Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM**

The Worship, Music & Arts Committee will meet Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM to decorate the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas. We would love to have more volunteers join us. All of the supplies are already at the church; just bring yourself! We will meet again on Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM to take down and store the decorations.

Please contact **Chira Cratsley** (chira.cratsley@gmail.com; 412.956.7489) or **Bob Lintner** (blintner401@gmail.com;



## An Advent Service of Healing and Hope

**Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>  
@ 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary**

Last December, SCPC held its first Service of Healing and Hope during the Advent Season. Since then, we also had a Summer Healing Service, where we talked with God as we walked the Labyrinth and laid our burdens at God's feet. The Holy Spirit was tangibly present both times, comforting and restoring God's people as we met together to worship Jesus and seek his peace, presence, and healing mercies in our lives. WMA has felt God leading us to have another service of healing and hope, and we are excited to invite you again to the Advent healing service, *Let There Be Light*, on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary,

*Let There Be Light* is a time of music, reflection, and anointing designed to bring Christ's Light into our longings, our disappointments, and our broken-heartedness. While there is much joy and anticipation during Advent, it can also be a difficult time for many of us missing loved ones or struggling with grief and anxiety in a variety of ways. Life's challenges can leave us feeling weary, broken, or burdened, but this service is a reminder that we are not alone, and that healing is possible through the power of our loving Savior.

Each of us has an area of life where we could use God's restorative touch and presence, whether it is physical, spiritual, emotional, or relational. During the service, we will pray for healing, both individually and collectively, believing in the power of God to bring renewal to every aspect of our lives. God loves you and wants to heal you! Let's draw close to God this Advent and experience God's presence and power in a new way together!

# Worship News

## Christmas Eve Service

*New Time, New Service, Same Jesus*

**Our Christmas “Eve” Service will be at a “new” time this year.** This year, Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, so we will celebrate the birth of Christ during our usual Sunday morning worship time of 10:30 AM. We will have a special, festive, music-forward service with many of the elements and traditions we love and cherish each year including lighting the Christ candle, Sharing the Light, and singing our favorite hymns, as well as some new elements and a lovely reception in Fellowship Hall hosted by the Deacons following the service.

**There will not be an evening service on Christmas Eve** this year; not only due to the date, but also because in past years, the weather is often icy, cold, and unsafe to drive in late at night.

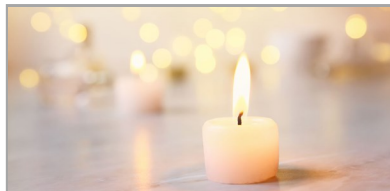
We hope that everyone will enjoy a cozy and peaceful evening with their family, friends, and loved ones and travel safely wherever you may go! **We will have a regular church service on Sunday December 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:30 AM** as our last service of 2023!



## Christmas Dedications

Poinsettias are available for \$10 each if you'd like to purchase one or more in memory and/or or in honor of a loved one. **Orders must be received by the church office no later than Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

Please use the order form included in this issue of the *Good News*.

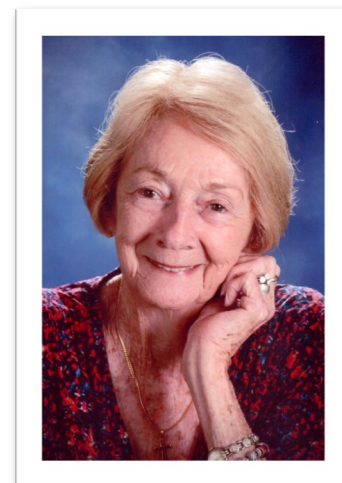


## In memoriam

We share the sad news of Arla Gracey's passing on Thursday, October 26, 2023. She was 93 ½ years old. Arla was a longtime member of Sharon Church and now resides with God Almighty in all glory and peace.

**A memorial service honoring Arla's life will be held on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 11 am at Sharon Community Presbyterian Church, with a reception to follow.**

Please keep her daughter, Donna, and family in prayer.





# Mission & Outreach

## Support the West Hills Food Pantry Families

During November, the Mission and Outreach Committee will be collecting donations to support the **Christmas Shop** of the West Hills Food Pantry.

The WHFP purchases many gift items appropriate for their clients. The clients are able to select gifts for their family members, free of charge, from the **Christmas Shop**. All donations will be used to support the Christmas Shop and bring cheer to those experiencing food insecurity.

Donations will be collected from Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup>. Please utilize the envelope provided in this *Good News*. There will also be envelopes for available in the narthex. If writing a check:

- ♦ Make checks payable to **SHARON CHURCH**
- ♦ On the Memo Line **WHFP Christmas Cheer**



**Thank You** for your cheerful support of the food pantry.



## Prayer Bead Crafting

**Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 PM in Room 202.**

Please join the Mission Committee for another Prayer Bead crafting party on **Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 PM in Room 202**. You do not need to come for the entire time. All are welcome!

### WAYS TO GIVE



Through your  
congregation



Donate by  
credit card online at  
[pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy)



Text  
CHRISTMASJOY  
to 91999  
to give or visit [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy)



## Christmas Joy Offering in December

The Christmas Joy Offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and develops our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Envelopes for this offering will be available in the Narthex from **Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> through Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**. Checks should be made out to Sharon Community Presbyterian Church, with 'Christmas Joy' in the memo line..



**CHRISTMAS JOY**

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



**MATTHEW 25**

# Mission & Outreach

## Soup For Souls

THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to the Soup for Souls ministry! Our freezer is now stocked with delicious Chicken & Vegetable soup for anyone who needs it.



### Soup For Souls



Chicken and Vegetable



If you know someone who is feeling under the weather or just needs a little “pick-me-up”, feel free to take them a container of soup from the kitchen freezer.

## Snack Packs for RMU Students and Young Adults

The Mission & Outreach committee, along with other members of our congregation, have assembled “snack packs” for RMU students and young adults. They are in the Narthex and handed out by our WMA welcome team.

If you see a RMU student and they don’t have one, please feel free to offer one.



## “Bottoms Up” Diaper Drive

**Collection Dates: January 7<sup>th</sup> through February 1<sup>st</sup>.**

After talking with leadership at the West Hills Food Pantry, Mission and Outreach learned that they are in serious need of baby wipes and diapers. **Please consider donating baby wipes and diapers (sizes 3, 4, and 5) throughout the month of January.**

A collection area will be set up in the Narthex.





# Fall Festival and Chili Cook-off Recap

The second annual Chili Cookoff was a great success! There were 7 different chili's, corn bread, and desserts. No one left hungry! Great fellowship was had by all.

Many people of the congregation joined in the hymn sing while the youth painted pumpkins. It was a wonderful way to spend an afternoon of fun and fellowship.

**Congratulations to Debbie Williams for taking home the chili cookoff trophy!**





# Children and Family Ministry

## Children's Church

In Children's Church, we have been following *Kids Own Worship Curriculum*. This Fall, we focused on Genesis and children were engaged with a variety of lessons, games, and creative activities. We will continue using this curriculum as we move into the Advent season!

We will continue using "God's Big Story" Cards and I will continue sending emails when a lesson correlates with a card. This is a great way to engage with the lessons outside of Children's Church!



## Gingerbread Nativity Scene Kids' Activity



**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am**

On December 24, the children are invited to begin working on their **Gingerbread Nativity Scene** in Children's Church!

Children will continue working on their creations at the *luncheon* following the service.

All materials will be provided.

We hope to see you join in on the fun!

*Candy canes  
are sweet,  
but Jesus  
is the sweetest  
gift ever!*



# Generosity

As we approach the end of another busy year, this is an opportune time to review how your generosity has led to many significant achievements in expanding our mission and ministry here at Sharon Church. We are all aware of the challenges facing churches today, but I deeply believe that God is doing new things in our midst. Thinking about all that is happening now at Sharon Church reminds me of how incredibly rich the church is in so many ways, and how much we have to offer if we only trust in God and are generous with our God-given gifts.

As the church, we may feel that in order to make a difference in the lives of our members and communities and to remain relevant in this quickly changing world, we need more — more young families in our buildings, more people in our pews, more deep pockets, more programming, and on and on. However, Psalm 23 affirms that through

God's presence and providence, ***we have been given all that we need to be faithful to God's call.***

As people of faith, we need to trust that promise and we need to act on that truth. While the outside world may tell us that the church is losing relevance, I don't believe that's true. We are enough. We lack

nothing. God our Shepherd has given us all that we need to live and serve as followers of Christ, if only we are bold enough to believe it.

So where is God, through the Holy Spirit, working in Sharon Church right now? Here are some examples:

- ♦ Your Session has been studying a book titled "Sailboat Church," by Joan Gray, that is focused on helping the church to rethink its mission and practice, with a goal of allowing the Holy Spirit to be our guide. You will be hearing more about this, and will recognize an emphasis on prayer and listening for what God is leading us to do, noticing God and following

God. As Pastor Becky says, "Back to basics in our lives of faith: God is with us, our job is to join what God is *already* doing."

- ♦ We have developed vibrant worship and music, with talented musicians/vocalists who are engaged in delivering meaningful spiritual music, both traditional and contemporary. We have also welcomed a number of younger people in our music ministry and they have become a vital part of our church community. We asked God for younger people, and they have come to us offering their gifts and talents in worship and music!
- ♦ Our online worship service, which was developed during the Covid pandemic, has allowed us to reach not only our at-home members, but also the community at large. Every week, we are able to spread the good news and love of Jesus Christ to a growing audience. Pastor Becky recently received a gracious note from an online worshiper who suffers from cerebral palsy and partial blindness. He discovered our weekly broadcast, and now worships and prays with us regularly. He said that we are truly a blessing in his life, and viewing our worship service allows him to feel the love of God we spread each week. We have asked to reach more people, and we are.
- ♦ During worship, members are sharing testimonies of the ways God is working in their lives. This opens our eyes to watching for ways God may be speaking to us, even in the small and granular parts of our lives. This encourages all of us to more regularly look for God in everyday events and occurrence, builds faith and partnership with God, and helps us to understand and do God's will here on earth. Thank you to those who have shared. We look forward to hearing more stories of God working in your lives. Please speak up and let us know you have a testimony!
- ♦ Opportunities for fellowship have expanded through our Deacon's ministry with weekly gatherings after worship on Sundays, picnics during the warmer months, and special events like the recent chili cook-off contest. These





gatherings allow us to regularly connect more deeply with fellow members and offer our care and support.

- ♦ The Mission Committee is actively involved in outreach to those in our community, and more broadly, in the world. We have adopted the Matthew 25 Initiative as a church and guiding light in mission. Recent activities such as the Soles 4 Souls shoe collection; preparation of meals and delivery to a Pittsburgh Men's Shelter; hosting of and financial support for the West Hills Food Pantry; and the Soup for Souls initiative, involving preparation of soup for those in need, are all examples of ongoing mission activities, and spreading the love of God to others.
- ♦ There is interest from an outside benevolent organization, Cares of Western Pennsylvania, which provides support for developmentally disabled adults, to use a portion of our facility on weekdays. This has resulted in our making important enhancements to our facility to upgrade to current building codes, allowing for use by outside groups. This will allow us to further broaden our outreach to the community at large, potentially offering excess space to other benevolent organizations in the future.
- ♦ Over the last couple of years, we have welcomed many new faces in worship—visitors, travelers, friends and family of members, and those who found us. This fall

we welcomed several Robert Morris students—which is an answer to prayer! We look forward to broadening this engagement with other students from the local university.

As you can see from these examples, God IS with us, and is using Sharon Church to make a difference in the world. We are finding that there are endless opportunities – all we need to do is to prayerfully listen for God's guidance, be inspired by it, and then encourage everyone to participate in making a difference not only in the lives those in our congregation, but also those in, and beyond, our local communities.



During these last months of the year, which represent the peak giving season for churches, I invite you to consider making additional generous gifts to Sharon Church to support the activities and initiatives we have undertaken to continue the work of God in the world. We need not only your support through the sharing of your time and talents, but also your financial gifts to help us on the transformational path to being a Holy Spirit-led congregation.

~ Todd Carter, Generosity Chair



**2024 Offering Envelopes are available for pick-up in the Narthex**

**What is Per Capita?**



**The Per Capita amount for 2024 is \$36.35**

**LAST CHANCE**

## Membership Directory Update

A new and updated Membership directory is currently being compiled. **We are asking all members to contact Anna in the church office with any new or changed personal contact information.**

We are busy gathering new data and verifying the information we already have. Our new directory will be completed this Fall. ~ Elder Lorna Phillips.



## The Story of the Candy Cane

This story was told to my children many years ago by our friend, an Episcopal priest, Rev. Victor Zook, when he took a candy cane from his Christmas tree. He broke it into several pieces, which he shared with each of us, and said-as I remember- "This is almost like communion. "For many years, Christians have used the red and white peppermint candy cane to remember what Christmas celebrates."

"It is shaped like a shepherd's crook as the shepherds were the first to worship Christ. The white is for the purity of Christ. The wide red stripe is for the sacrifice Christ made for us on the cross. The thin red stripes are the sacrifices we must make to be more like Him. The sharp peppermint flavor reminds us of the aromatic herb Hyssop, from Psalm 51, 'Purge me with Hyssop, wash me and I will be whiter than snow.'"

As we traveled home, we talked of our new story to share. Each year we tell the story as we take a candy cane from the tree and share it with family and friends. ~ *Kay Schurr*

**Sharon Community  
Presbyterian Church**

522 Carnot Road  
Moon Township, PA 15108

Church Office  
(412)-264-7400

admin@sharoncpc.com  
www.sharoncpc.com

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*The Good News*





## *Sharon Church Homebound Members*

**Mr. G. Roger Behm**

**Mrs. Laverne Petrie**

**Mrs. Nancy Bush**

**Mrs. Shirley Roberts**

**Mrs. June Campbell**

**Mrs. Anna Roeder**

**Mr. William Crookshank**

**Mrs. Janet Roye**

**Mrs. Joyce Farquhar**

**Mrs. Jane Schuliger**

**Ms. Nancy Handerhan**

**Mr. Harry Schurr II**

**Mrs. Arlene Johnson**

**Mr. Joseph Sharkey Sr.**

**Mr. John Lundeen**

**Mrs. Elinor Taylor**

**Mrs. Ruth Meanor**

**Mr. Carl Walpusk**

**Mrs. Joanna Mosca**

**Mrs. Miriam Wolf**

**Mr. John Yeck**



*Insert*



# *Christmas Dedications*

As our Savior Christ Jesus brings us new life at Christmas, we remember and honor those we love by filling our worship space with living Poinsettias—a flower also known as the Christmas Star.

To order your poinsettia(s), please fill out this order form and either place it in the Offering plate or mail it to the church office (522 Carnot Road, Moon Twp, PA 15108). Poinsettias are available at a cost of \$10.00 each. Checks should be made out to “*Sharon Presbyterian Church*” and payment must accompany your order.

Orders must be received by the church office **no later than Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

Presented by: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Poinsettia Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ X \$10.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Flowers may be picked up after the Christmas Eve service.

- ☐ I will take my poinsettias home after the Christmas Eve Service.
- ☐ I wish to donate my poinsettias to visitors who attend the Christmas Eve Service.

*Please call Myra Leigh Tokar at 412-974-3329 with any questions.*

*Insert*