



# *The Good News*

## *Sharon Church*

*December 2018*



Dear Church Family,

As I prepare for the Christ child to come again at Christmas, apart from the meditations of my heart, there seems to be so much to do as we prepare to celebrate Christmas—a tree to trim, gifts to wrap, cookies to bake, and travel plans to make. And in my well-intended preparations, I sometimes look up and find crooked bows, extra tape on packages (where there was not enough paper to cover the gift!), the tree leaning ever-so-slightly to the right, cookies sacrificed to my dog, and I think, well... this is Christmas—a perfectly imperfect union of heaven and earth, the coming together of our best intentions within the limits of our real lives, and it brings into focus a

serious question, where do we find our Christmas joy?

And then I remember Mary and Joseph's time of preparation as they anticipated the coming of the Christ-child. It was not filled with baby showers or sonograms or cute onesies—certainly not tree trimming. Rather their lives were filled with the dust and dirt of travel, displacement, and significant uncertainty. And in the Gospel of Luke, Mary gives birth to Jesus when she was away from home registering for an imperial census in Bethlehem, Joseph's ancestral home town. Luke tells us that after Mary gives birth in Bethlehem, there was no civilized place for her to recover, "no place for them in the inn" (2:7). So, Mary and Joseph find shelter in a stable, wrap Jesus in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, a feeder for animals. And the story of the birth of our Savior brings into focus a serious question, where did they find their Christmas joy?

Do we find our Christmas joy in our perfectly executed plans? Do we find our Christmas joy in the highest levels of comfort and ease? Life and scripture seem to challenge us to explore where, indeed, we find our Christmas joy. Yet, as our Christmas efforts serve to celebrate the gift of God's presence, we remember and connect with the joy of God's love and presence given to us once and for all in the Christ-child. We remember and connect with the reality that some of our efforts, our best intentions, our ambitions and plans in this life will fall short or fall apart, but Christ's love for us will never fall short or fall apart. And we are able celebrate the joy of Christmas through crooked bows and crooked roads because through it all we are given the chance to share the unshakable, undeterred, gathering, hopeful and humble love of God in Christ.

*Merry Christmas!*

*Pastor Becky*

## GENEROSITY TEAM

I would say this year's Generosity Campaign went very well. I did not plan to be missing in action, but many folks stepped up to carry on. I want to thank Todd Carter, Mark and Karen Killmeyer, Ann Mizer, Susanne Udvari, Deb Prostko, Dan and Grace Peters, Deb Williams and last but not least, Pastor Becky for all of their help and fine work.

Early on I had decided that we would not be asking for pledges this year like we had done in years past. Somehow, and I take responsibility, this message was lost on many folks who were confused at not being asked to make a pledge to the church. My intent was to have us make an intentional commitment to the church and to do it privately. I called this the 'Blind Pledge' which we had done before.

In years past pledges were used to construct a spending plan for the ensuing years. This year I wanted the Finance Committee to build a spending plan based on thoughtful consideration of what would be needed to be able to pay the staff and keep the church in good repair plus build in planned completion of deferred maintenance that has been neglected through the years. This would be our financial goal for 2019. I thought if we don't have a financial goal we would be missing the point of even having a budget. How does one decide how much of a commitment or pledge to make if there is nothing to shoot for? I apologize for this being confusing to many folks. I had not explained it in a manner that was understandable.

Regardless, I have learned a lot as the chair of this 'new' committee. And, I can sense a growing desire of many of us to intentionally plan and focus on keeping the church financially stable. In the current social environment where the fastest growing church is the church of 'none' we all are challenged to continue to keep this Christian Community together in our love of Jesus, hoping we can reach and serve others. This is not an easy task. But we are being asked to do the difficult things in keeping Christ alive. Thank you, all, for your intentional commitment to our church family and for keeping it strong.

Te Deum

Mark Mizer, Chair of Generosity



<b>DECEMBER CHURCH</b>						
Nov Sunday 25	Monday 26	Tuesday 27	Wednesday 28	Thursday 29	Friday 30	Saturday 1
Sunday 2	Monday 3	Tuesday 4	Wednesday 5	Thursday 6	Friday 7	Saturday 8
10:00 – 11:00 AM Fellowship Hall – pack cookies MISSION EVENT 11:00 AM Worship Communion	1:30 pm Prayer Ministry 6:30 pm Small Group <i>FP Toy Drive</i>	7:00pm Christian Nurture 7:00pm Prop & Maint <i>FP Toy Drive</i>	8:00 am Men’s Study Group 6:15 pm Bell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir		12:00 Willing Workers Christmas Lunch – Montour Country Club	
Sunday 9	Monday 10	Tuesday 11	Wednesday 12	Thursday 13	Friday 14	Saturday 15
10:00-10:45 AM Christian Nurture 10:00-11:00 AM Fellowship 11:00 AM Children’s Parent Worshin	6:30 pm Small Group	6:00pm Personnel 7:00pm Finance & Generosity	8:00 am Men’s Study Group 12:15 Sharon Quilters 6:15 pm Bell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	12:00 AARP lunch  6:00 Session - dinner		
Sunday 16	Monday 17	Tuesday 18	Wednesday 19	Thursday 20	Friday 21	Saturday 22
10:00-10:45 AM Christian Nurture 10:00-11:00 AM Fellowship 11:00 AM Christmas Cantata	6:30 pm Small Group		8:00 am Men’s Study Group 6:15 pm Bell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir			
Sunday 23	Monday 24	Tuesday 25	Wednesday 26	Thursday 27	Friday 28	Saturday 29
10:00-11:00 AM Fellowship 11:00 AM Worship	<i>Christmas Eve</i> 7:00pm Worship	<i>Merry Christmas</i> Office closed	Office Closed	Office Closed	Office Closed	
Sunday 30	Monday 31	Tuesday 1	Wednesday 2	Thursday 3	Friday 4	Saturday 5
10:00-11:00 AM Fellowship 11:00 AM Worship	<i>New Year’s Eve</i>	<i>Happy New Year</i> Office closed	8:00 am Men’s Study Group 6:15 pm Bell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir			

<b>DECEMBER COMMUNITY</b>							
<b>Nov Sunday 25</b>	<b>Monday 26</b>	<b>Tuesday 27</b>	<b>Wednesday 28</b>	<b>Thursday 29</b>	<b>Friday 30</b>	<b>Saturday 1</b>	
<b>Sunday 2</b>	<b>Monday 3</b>	<b>Tuesday 4</b>	<b>Wednesday 5</b>	<b>Thursday 6</b>	<b>Friday 7</b>	<b>Saturday 8</b>	
	7:00 VB 8:30 pm VB 7:00 pm AA #204 6:00 pm Sounds of Pittsburgh – Sanctuary <i>FP Toy Drive</i>	9am Food Pantry 6:00pm Soccer 8:00 VB 9:00 VB  <i>FP Toy Drive</i>	7:00 pm AA Library 7:00 pm Bridge #204 6:00 Soccer 8:30 VB	6:00pm Boys Soccer 8:00pm Soccer 10:00pm Dads BB  7:00 pm AA FH	6:00 Soccer 7:00 TGIF	9:00am VB - YCC	
<b>Sunday 9</b>	<b>Monday 10</b>	<b>Tuesday 11</b>	<b>Wednesday 12</b>	<b>Thursday 13</b>	<b>Friday 14</b>	<b>Saturday 15</b>	
	7 pm VB 8:30 pm VB 7:00 pm AA #204 6:00 pm Sounds of Pittsburgh – Fellowship Hall	9am–Food Pantry 6:00pm Soccer 8:00 VB 9:00 VB	7:00 pm AA Library 7:00 pm Bridge #204 6:00 pm Boys Soccer 8:30 VB	6:00pm Boys Soccer 8:00 pm VB 10:00pm Dads BB  7:00 pm AA FH	6:00 Soccer 7:00pm TGIF	9:00am VB - YCC	
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	Christmas Eve	Merry Christmas	7:00 pm AA Library 6:00 pm Boys VB 8:30 pm VB	6:00pm Boys Soccer 8:00 pm VB 10:00pm Dads BB  7:00 pm AA FH	6:00 Soccer	9:00am VB – YCC	
<b>Sunday 30</b>	<b>Monday 31</b>	<b>Tuesday 1</b>	<b>Wednesday 2</b>	<b>Thursday 3</b>	<b>Friday 4</b>	<b>Saturday 5</b>	
	New Year's Eve	Happy New Year	7:00 pm AA Library 6:00 pm Boys VB 8:30 pm VB	6:00pm Boys Soccer 8:00 pm VB 10:00pm Dads BB 7:00 pm AA FH	6:00 Soccer 7:00pm TGIF	9:00am VB – YCC	

**NAME TAGS** - New name badges have been purchased for the Elders, Deacons, Ushers, Sunday School Teachers and Group Leaders. Teachers and ushers are encouraged to wear theirs whenever they are teaching or ushering. Deacons and Elders are encouraged to wear theirs at all times at church so that the congregation is able to identify church leaders.



### *Did You Know?*

Did you know that there are many ways to volunteer on Sunday mornings?

1. You can help teach Sunday School, both adults and children. Contact Jeanne Sergi.
2. You can volunteer in the nursery with paid attendants. Contact Jeanne Sergi.
3. You can join donate to the West Hills Community Food Bank. Place non-perishables in the container in the narthex.

### **Property & Maintenance**

**Thank you** to all who turned out to help with the Fall Clean-up on December 1. The workers included: Rob & Kathy Hamsher, Don Phillips, Dave & Robert Doughty, Dan Peters, Debbie Williams, Pastor Becky, George Kovatch, Tom Capkovic, Bruce Clark, Stephen Ford (and Avigail), Kathy Smith, Myra Tokar, Pat Bricklemeyer and Todd Carter. Thanks to their efforts, we managed to rake the leaves, erect the nativity scene, clean walls and baseboards, and repair multiple torn screens in Fellowship Hall before the rains set in. Thank you for a job well done!

**CHURCH CORRIDOR DOORS** - As a result of a recent audit of our campus by our insurance carrier, we have been informed that we will no longer be allowed to keep the corridor and stair-well doors propped open. These are fire doors and are intended to help limit the spread of any potential fire within the building.

Your Property team has been working hard to make the necessary adjustments, so the doors will swing and close freely, and you will be seeing reminder signs being added to the doors in the near future.

We recognize that this represents a change and inconvenience for us, but it is necessary in order for us to maintain our insurance coverage without undue increases in our rates. We know we can count on everyone's cooperation. Thank you in advance.



## **Mission Milestones December 2018**

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

As we begin this season, this verse comes to mind because God, the author of generosity, gave us every good gift – the gift of creation, the gift of Jesus and ultimately the gift of eternal life.

This holy season give us many opportunities to respond to God’s generous gifts by giving gifts of time, talent and treasure to others.

The response to the Food Pantry Giving Basket has been wonderful and we can also help those with food insecurity by directing our Christmas memorial gifts to the West Hills Food Pantry. Donations for Walmart Gift Cards for the Pantry through December 3<sup>rd</sup> amount to \$4, 690. This is a record high for the Giving Basket and we are so grateful for all the contributions! Memorial gift donations were also generous. Many members of our congregation give countless hours of time and talent to the operation of the food pantry.

THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING is yet another opportunity to show our gratitude for God’s generosity to us. Envelopes for this offering will be in the pews every Sunday during Advent beginning on Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. This offering is used to support retired clergy who may not have accrued sufficient pension benefit to meet basic needs. It also supports minority students. The Pittsburgh Presbytery deducts 15% of this offering to support the Coleman- Patrick Scholarship Fund. These scholarships are awarded to minority students with financial need who have legal or permanent residence within the bounds of the Pittsburgh Presbytery. Churches may choose to opt out of this deduction, but the Mission Committee endorses the idea of helping local students.

What greater gift could we give back to God than being Christ’s body, arms and legs in serving those who are temporarily homeless over the holiday season? Sharon’s Day of Support for Family Promise is Wednesday, December 26<sup>th</sup>. Cooks, evening hosts and van drivers are still needed. Can we really examine our hearts and say that we don’t have the time or talents to do these simple tasks? There is a sign- up sheet in the lobby or call Grace Peters at 412-264-7683.

One wonderful example of giving of oneself is Gladys Johnston who has served on the Mission Committee for decades. She is going off the committee and her gifts will be deeply missed. Thank you, Gladys!!!!

In gratitude for all of the gifts in this congregation,  
Your Mission Committee Grace Peters, Stacy Ford, Gladys Johnston and Wayne Schuliger



## Christmas Cards and Our Shut-Ins



We have lots of cards, but there are only a handful of Deacons to spread that cheer! We thought it would be wonderful to get many people in our congregation involved in helping us spread some Christmas cheer to our home-bound members. Please stop by the table in the narthex, pick up a packet of cards and a sheet with names and addresses on it, sign the cards, and mail them in time for the holiday. This card project will start in late November and run through Christmas. If you have any questions, comments, or ideas about cards, please contact me at [wildemesstraveller@yahoo.com](mailto:wildemesstraveller@yahoo.com) or at (412) 983-5954. Thank you from your Greeting Card Coordinator!  
Sharon Church Deacons, Megan Hamsher

***Our Caring Deacons!*** Our Deacons were busy during the holidays delivering homemade bread and poinsettias to our “at home” members of the congregation. Their efforts to ensure no one is neglected during this special time of the year is appreciated by all.

A word of appreciation for all the volunteers that helped with the Cookie Bags and for those that contributed with Food Pantry gift cards. These acts of caring not only benefits those in need; it provides an opportunity to live our faith, and supports the Deacon’s efforts.

**Rocking and Talking with Dr. George Branch-Trevathan**  
**Associate Professor of Religion at Thiel College**  
**Sunday, December 9th at 10:00 a.m.**  
**In Fellowship Hall**

Bring your burning questions of the Bible, God in the world, or life in general. We will grab some coffee, rock and talk together. This is not a lecture or a class, but a conversation among God’s people.



All are welcomed, so come and rock and talk as we get to know one another!



## Members

Family of Joanne Hagar  
 Family of Mary Ann Sirney  
 Joe Sergi  
 Henry family  
 Mark Mizer  
 Zwergel family  
 Linda Corcoran & family  
 Jane Schuliger  
 James and the Cratsley family  
 Joyce Zalucky  
 Abby Zalucky  
 Judy Yeck  
 Painter family  
 ClaraAnne Schmidt  
 June Campbell  
 Grace Bowden and family  
 Shane Corcoran  
 Jerry Campbell and family  
 Pat Hersh  
 Gordon Hurlburt  
 David & Carol Gordon  
 Family of "Hank" Erskine

## Family & Friends

Lee Ann Perko & family (Cindy Zwergel)  
 Ann (Lorna Phillips)  
 George Jones (Judy Yeck)  
 Shannon (Judy Yeck)  
 Jennifer (Barb Cain)  
 Kathy Seeds (Joanne Hagar)  
 Caleb Leone (Judy Yeck)  
 Betty Miller (Sandy)  
 Joe Orient family (Sandy)  
 Maria Guzzo and her family (Lucie Lenz)  
 Lannie Gartner  
 James  
 Amanda & Kim (Myra)

Connie (Pam Wieland)  
 Carol (Sandy Hershberger)  
 Dave (Eonta)  
 Elizabeth (Cindy Zwergel)  
 Kurt (Sharon Krupka)  
 Marty (Wade & Elaine Hoffman)  
 Teri (Joanne Hagar)  
 Dolores (Hamshers)  
 Buddy & Tracey (Sharon Krupka)  
 Miller Family (Judy Yeck)  
 Veronica (Pam Wieland)  
 Carol (Joyce Zalucky)  
 Jeff (Dorothy Bower)  
 Bob (Kathy Hamsher)  
 Ben (Linda Corcoran)  
 James (Linda Corcoran)  
 Valerie (Linda Corcoran)  
 Kris (Linda Corcoran)  
 Rachel (Kay Schurr's niece)  
 Jonell (Sally Shirra)  
 Ian (Jan Weber)  
 Debbie (Nancy Handerhan)  
 Debbie (Pam Wieland)  
 Chuck (Sarah Cripe's father)  
 Dorie (Linda Corcoran)  
 Mimi and Ian (Barb Cain)  
 Jody (Carol Musgrave's niece)  
 Patricia (Thompsons' daughter)  
 Patricia (friend of George Hollis)  
 Makenzie (Lorraine Keith)  
 Christina (Wayne Schulinger)

## **THOSE SERVING IN THE ARMED SERVICES**

Donnie & Brett Gordon (brothers of Holly Henry)  
 Christopher Boyer (Prostkos' son-in-law)  
 Walker Loeffler (Meanors' grandson)  
 Nick Thompson (Thompsons' grandson)

## CHRISTIAN ED NEWS

MANY THANKS to all who helped construct and fill boxes for the Operation Christmas Child project. Thanks also to all who donated items and money for the boxes. Forty boxes were completed and delivered to the distribution point at Calvary Presbyterian Church in McDonald.

We hope to see everyone at the second Mission Sunday this coming Sunday, December 2, in Fellowship Hall during the Formation Hour, 10 – 11am. Adults are needed to help children decorate bags and then pack the bags with cookies for our at-home members. It is hoped that members will volunteer to take the cookie bags to our at-home members whose addresses will be provided.

There will be no Sunday School for anyone on Sunday, Dec. 2, as it is a Mission Sunday. There will be no Sunday School for children on December 9 as they will practice for worship from 10 – 10:30 in the children's music room. Adults will have class that day. December 16 will be the last Sunday School for children and adults until January 6, 2019.

The Christian Education Committee wishes everyone the blessings of the Christmas Season as we await and celebrate the birth of the Christ child who is the light of the world.

## YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED!

*Children's Worship Service Christmas Celebration  
Jesus Calling: The Story of Christmas*

Our children will present songs and readings during the sermon time of worship. Please join us in Fellowship Hall after worship for a Christmas lunch. Lasagna, salad, rolls and cookies provided by the Christian Ed Committee



Sunday, December 9  
11:00 Worship Service  
12:00 Christmas Lunch  
Fellowship Hall



**CONGRATULATIONS!!!** Kilee Bomgardner and Justin Young announce their engagement. From Kilee: I have exciting news. We are **FINALLY** engaged! God is good!!! ♡ We wanted to pass the news along to you since you have been so supportive in our journey

### DECEMBER WORSHIP & FORMATION DATES

- December 2 10:00am Fellowship time - packing cookies for our at-home members  
No Christian Formation Classes
- December 9 10:00am Children practice in Music Room  
10:00am Fellowship Rocks - Dr. George Branch-Trevathan  
Christian Formation Adult Ed  
11:00am Worship - Children participate in service  
12:00pm Luncheon for Congregation provided by Church
- December 16 10:00am Fellowship Rocks  
Christian Formation Classes  
11:00am Christmas Cantata
- December 23 10:00am Fellowship Rocks  
**No Christian Formation Classes**  
11:00am Worship
- December 24 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service
- December 30 10:00am Fellowship Rocks  
**No Christian Formation Classes**  
11:00am Worship

## MUSIC NEWS

### Sunday, December 9

Advent Pick Up Choir! By popular demand, the “Pick Up Choir” opportunities during the summer months make a reappearance during the Advent season. Anyone who would like to participate in singing *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* with the choir during worship on December 9 is welcome to come. There are no age or experience restrictions for this opportunity. Simply show up at 10:30 that morning and anyone present may practice the song. This is for fun and for the glory of God. We welcome everyone!



### Sunday, December 9

The Children of SCPC will present an Advent program, *Jesus Calling: The Story of Christmas*, during worship. This program features traditional Christmas carols, Scripture, and a child-friendly retelling of the first Christmas in a devotional-style format.

### Sunday, December 16

The Chancel Choir will present a Cantata, *A Celebration of Carols*, during worship. This Advent program sets lyrics of expectation and hope to familiar seasonal tunes, knitted together with scripture and inspirational prose.

### Sunday, December 23

The Handbell Choir will set the mood for the final hours of Advent with the piece, *Carol Medley*, during worship. These lively carols reach far back into the musical history of the church, imparting a sense of wonder and joy.

### Monday, December 24

Lessons and Carols. The congregation will take over the music during the Christmas Eve worship, participating in a joyful mix of favorite Christmas Carols.

We extend to everyone the hope for a deeply meaningful Advent and a joyous Christmas. May all of us seek His face and believe!



SDG,  
*Mark and Treva*

## Children's Ministry

Merry Christmas! This month the children will be learning about Advent and the Birth of Christ during Children's Church. I love teaching children because they have such a simple faith and I love watching their eyes light up this time of year. The beauty and wonder that surrounds the birth of the Christ child captivates their little minds. It's almost like their innocence and childlike faith simple just embraces the JOY of the season. It's through their eyes that we are often reminded that Jesus was a baby in the manger and a little child before he became the man that died on the Cross for our sins.

Madi lost her first years ago and a she asked me if loose tooth and That was such a that made Jesus's alive for me. Yes, loose tooth and he adorable toothless question from a me connect with



tooth almost five couple days later Jesus ever had a lost his teeth too. moment in my life childhood come Jesus did have a probably had that grin too! That five-year-old made Jesus in such a new

and special way. He truly was a little baby and a child! He really needed held and cuddled from his parents, He really was a baby born as our Savior. He really was a little boy that ran around and played. He really did lose His baby teeth!

I pray this Christmas Season that Christ reveals Himself to you in such a simple and special way, that you will experience the same JOY that the shepherds had as they praised God for all that they had seen and heard that night. I pray that you will experience this Christmas with the JOY of childlike faith!

*JOY to the world, the Lord is come! ~ Luke 2  
Merry Christmas!*

*Ms. Tami*