



The Good News

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"Caring People Reaching  
 Out To Others"



Sharon Community  
 Presbyterian Church

November/December  
 2019

## The Good News

Sharon Faithful,

One of my favorite passages from scripture comes from Zephaniah 3:14-20. It is one of the few places where we are to imagine God singing over Israel: "Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! <sup>15</sup>The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. <sup>16</sup>On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup>The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing <sup>18</sup>as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. <sup>19</sup>I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. <sup>20</sup>At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord."

It is a song of comfort and encouragement for God's people to give them hope in their future and to remind them *who* would be the one to restore them—"God who is in your midst." We often read this passage during the Advent season as the prophets call to us in the darkness and prepare us for God to show us the way once again to the Christ child. And as we walk with the prophets, Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zachariah, the wise men and the shepherds to the nativity scene, we, too, are asked to put our trust, our faith in the presence of God in our midst.

Our faith has taught us that God created Israel and later the church of Jesus Christ as a living example of God in our midst, God as community—a place where connection and trust are practiced and refined, where conflicts are resolved, and God's people live with one another in truth and share God's compassionate love. The apostle Paul added to this idea of God as community by calling the church "the body of Christ." A place where God's people gather and share with one another the good gifts of God and fruits of the Spirit; where we know the fullness of God through membership in the life of the church.

Today, while the church of Jesus Christ may physically look a bit different from ancient times, the church as God's light in the world, a city built on a hill that cannot be hid (Mt 5:14) and place where God is fully known through God's people has not changed. During Advent, we are reminded of God's light and hope within us; what Quaker missionary Thomas Kelly calls the "creative Life that presses to birth within us and illumines the face of God."

In Advent, there is a stirring. Something that awakens us and draws us to Christ's birth with anticipation and hope. And when we arrive, we learn that it was God who called us, and God who is with us and for us as the Christ-child. And if we are able to receive God's gift of light in the night, we are reborn.

*Continued on next page....*

### Sunday Worship

11:00 AM

### Fellowship Rocks

10:00 AM Fellowship Hall

### Christian Nurture

10:00 AM

Adult Formation  
 #202

Kids 3-5 yrs. #108

K—4th Grade #101

5th Grade & Older #105

Music #100

Children's Church #103

Nursery #106

May the light of God guide you and shine within you this Advent season! And may you be renewed and born again with Christ this Christmas!

Blessed Advent, *Pastor Becky*

## Christian Formation



It's hard to believe, but the season of Advent will begin on Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup>! The Christian Formation Committee will be sending each family an advent calendar and family activity designed to draw the family closer to each other and closer to God. Look for this in the mail the week before Thanksgiving as we prepare our hearts for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ!



The goal of children's Christian Formation is to teach about the Bible and our relationship with God, and also to teach them, to reach out to the community in faith and service. That is why we have a church wide mission event the first Sunday of every month during the Formation Hour at 10:00 am.



Our next mission project will be on **November 3rd** to support **Operation Christmas Child** (OCC), a "shoebox mission" of Samaritan's Purse. Each year, OCC sends shoebox gifts to needy children around the world, spreading "Good News & Great Joy". There are 3 ways you can help with this mission:

- 1) Take an empty OCC box from the narthex and fill it up with goodies. Suggestions can be found at <https://www.samaritanpurse.org/operation-christmas-child/pack-a-shoe-box/>
- 2) Donate items to use for the shoeboxes that the we will fill during the Mission Project on November 3<sup>rd</sup>
- 3) Pay for postage one or more of the boxes – each box costs \$9.00 to send – that means if we fill our goal of 50 boxes we need \$450 just for postage!

This mission really connects with our kids as they realize the abundance we are blessed with in our country. **Even if you can't make the mission event on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, you can still donate filled boxes or money for postage!** Please support this worthy charity that spreads the Gospel literally across the globe!



The Mission project on **December 1st** will be to prepare bags of cookies for our homebound members. This was such a success last year as the kids got to go out to bring comfort and joy to our faithful members who are homebound. Please support this mission of fellowship by coming to Fellowship Hall at 10:00 to help the kids fill these bags of deliciousness.



## Property Updates and Highlights



The last few months have been busy around the church.

We are welcoming a new cleaning service, ProCleaning Solutions, to take care of our day-to-day cleaning needs around the campus.

We have replaced the door lock on the upstairs door to the YCC with a keypad based lock system. This will allow us to increase building security and better regulate building access by the many community groups that use our building. Anyone needing access to the top floor of the building will need to contact the Office Manager to request an access code. If the keypad system proves to be successful after a trial period, we will consider other lock changes around the campus.

Modifications were made to the gutters on the food pantry side of the YCC building to better control drainage.

We will be proceeding with repairs/upgrades to the exterior lighting outside the main entrances to Fellowship Hall and the office.

We are in the planning stage for projects to be considered for 2020 and beyond. If members or committees have suggestions for building changes to better support our mission and programming, please bring them to our attention.

**FALL CLEAN-UP:** Save the date! The Annual Fall Clean-Up around the church will be held on **Saturday, November 23 from 8:00 to 12:00**. Weather permitting, the first priority will be on raking leaves and doing general clean-up outside around the church, but there is plenty of indoor work to do as well. Please bring a rake or leaf blower if you have one. Juice and hot drinks will be provided.

You do not have to come for the full 4 hours, come whenever you can, for as long as you are able. Help us get

## Meet Luanne Shock.



Luanne joined SCPC in 2018 after moving to Moon Township in 2017 with her husband, Jim, and dog, Chessie. She is a northern New Jersey native relocating to the Pittsburgh area in 2013 given Jim's desire to finally come home after being away 22 years.

Jim is a marketing professor at Robert Morris University and Luanne has worked as a human resources professional for the majority of her career. After spending over 30 years at a large pharmaceutical company, Luanne now has her own small human resources consulting company working primarily with nonprofit organizations. She is a docent at the National Aviary, hanging out with the birds every week, and sings with the South Hills Chorale, a former "singing community" of our own Pat Bricklemeyer and George Hollis!

### Online Giving Coming Soon....

Beginning in November, we will be offering a new, easy and convenient way to give your tithes and offerings to Sharon Church using a debit or credit card or electronic funds transfer. As more of us move toward automation of the many payments we make each week and month, online giving to the church provides yet another way to simplify your gifting to Sharon Church. Most churches of our size already offer some form of online giving, and we believe it will be an important addition for Sharon Church.

Here are a few facts and statistics about online giving:

- About 60% of churchgoers across all denominations already prefer to give electronically, while growth in online giving is expected to increase 176% in the next ten years
- Recent statistics show that 49% of all church giving transactions are made with a card
- Churches that accept tithing online have experienced an increase in overall donations by 32%.

The online giving service we will be implementing, which is hosted by the Presbyterian Foundation, is easily accessed through the church web site or a mobile app. You can rest easy knowing that the transaction is safe and secure, and your gift will be available to our ministry immediately, with no waiting periods.

Online giving offers benefits both for you and for Sharon Church:

- You can save a trip to the ATM on Sunday morning and avoid forgetting your checkbook or having to quickly fill out a check to make your gift
- You can also set up recurring donations to continue giving faithfully even on weeks you are not able to attend services
- The church benefits from a more steady and reliable flow of gifts
- Work to process checks and cash gifts is reduced when gifts are made online.

Much more information will be provided to you about our new online giving program, including all the mechanics, beginning in early November.

Todd Carter will be leading a class during Formation Hour on November 10<sup>th</sup> to provide all of the details about our new online giving program, and will answer all of your questions during that session.

### Building-up God's Church: Inside Out Task Forces

For two years, the Session has been discerning the best way to move forward funding two major property improvements—the parking lot, and electrical updates and air conditioning for the sanctuary and fellowship hall. With the helpful guidance of the congregation, the leadership of the Finance, Property and Generosity committees, the expertise of outside financial consultants, and prayerful consideration, we have created a financial plan to fund these capital improvements that includes congregational giving, use of reserve funds and a low interest loan.

However, what our plans for church campus improvements lack at this time lack is you!

While we have developed a financial plan for these big-ticket items, we would like to thoughtfully implement these renovations with **you** by creating two “task forces” or teams who are willing to gather and discuss the scope of our campus improvements—one team for the “Inside” of the church and one for the “Outside.”

The goal with these task forces is to open up creative, Spirit-led space for members to discern and develop a comprehensive vision for our church campus—how God would like to shape Sharon Church's campus to best serve Moon Township today. So we are not just “re-paving” or “getting air conditioning,” but developing a vision of what God is doing here at Sharon.

As our committees have contemplated our needed property renovations, they have also begun to imagine other ways we might improve our campus—such as, creating an area for our children to play (more green space, play areas, picnic benches, etc...), inviting signage for the frontage of the property, a garden labyrinth for meditation, rearranging the chancel space in the sanctuary, etc...The task forces would serve as exploratory groups who will actively work to discern concrete improvement “options” for session to approve before we break ground.



Get ready for the kids to perform in the annual Sharon Church **Christmas Pageant!** The pageant is being written by our own Tom Ingui and will be held during the worship service on **December 15<sup>th</sup>**. Tom has been working with the children prior to Sunday School from 10:00 – 10:15a.m. **All** children of the congregation are encouraged to come learn the Christmas songs for the pageant each week! There will be a **Dress Rehearsal** on **December 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.** prior to the Formation hour at 10:00 a.m. A CD will be sent home with each family for them to practice with - please help your child learn their lines and songs!



Christian Formation welcomes Sarah Painter as our Interim Children's Church and Event Director. She will plan, lead and administer Children's Church and family/children's events. Sarah is a child of this church and active elder. As well, she is a Moon Township resident, STEAM instructor for Snapology, has a B.S. in Elementary Education, enjoys art, sports, and spending time with my family.

Her dedication to the church and her passion for teaching children makes her a perfect fit for this position, and she will seamlessly step into where Tami has left off in children's ministry. The Christian Formation Committee will continue to oversee Children's Sunday Formation, Nursery and Administrative/Communication responsibilities. Please welcome Sarah into her new role as our Children's Church and Event Director. Sarah will have office hours on Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and may be reached at [penguinpainter@yahoo.com](mailto:penguinpainter@yahoo.com).

# Harvest Fun Fest



## Generosity

Our Generosity Campaign is off to a good start. On Sunday, October 13th, during Formation Hour in Room 202 I led a discussion to revisit an ongoing Generosity theme, Dream the Future. During this time we discussed the dreams we have been talking about for the last few years, specifically having someone to lead our Christian Education programs, update our aging buildings, re-create our music program and a host of other ideas that would move Sharon Church forward in a changing social environment.

We made sure we could discern the difference between our dreams, aspirations and goals. Dreams are things we think would be nice, but, may not be realistic or achievable. Aspirations are ideas for which we may be inclined and gifted to work with, but could exclude being able to achieve other ordinary life/church goals. Goals are, most of the time, and for personal reasons, commonly held achievements like education, career tracks, marriage, children and retirement. From our goals we start to plan how to make them into reality.

After worship, the same day the Finance Committee hosted a luncheon for the congregation to share their financial plans and goals for 2020. Our treasurer, Mark Killmeyer, did a marvelous job sharing with everyone the committee's plans which includes budgeting for putting money in reserves for emergencies and ongoing upkeep of the church campus, ongoing work to fund repaving our parking lot and upgrade our whole electrical system to be able to safely install and use air conditioning in the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. ( I think it is fair to say, having a building that is welcoming and useful to and for our community and guests who use our campus for different functions is one of our most important missions. ) Pastor Becky reinforced the point of having a safe and welcoming campus by sharing her plan to appoint two ad hoc task forces: one to assess the potential of making the outside areas of the church campus a mission focus in the community and another task force to assess the inside of our buildings to make them more useful and welcoming for groups to use our church as their activities center.

We will have Dedication Sunday on November 3rd. On this day we will ask all of you to prayerfully pledge your financial gift to this church for 2020. As we did last year, pledging will be personal and private, so, there will be no pledge cards. Your financial support is critical if we, as a congregation, want to continue to enjoy having the church we love. We cannot charge dues or levee taxes. This church can function only as long as each of us supports it financially. There are millions of charities wanting your money. We hope Sharon Church is at the top of your benevolence priorities.

Grace and Peace,  
Mark Mizer, Chair



## Adult Formation November-December 10:00 am-10:45 am

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>—All-Church Mission Engagement: Operation Christmas Child**

**November 10<sup>th</sup>—Online Giving with Todd Carter, room 202**

Todd Carter will be leading a class during Formation Hour on November 10<sup>th</sup> to provide all of the details about our new online giving program, and will answer all of your questions during that session.

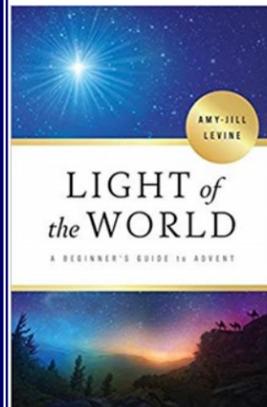
**November 17<sup>th</sup>— Resume Refresh with Luanne Shock, room 202**

Does your resume need an update??!!

As a 30-year human resources professional and spending lots of time reviewing resumes and interviewing candidates, SCPC member Luanne Shock has become pretty good at spotting a great resume! As well, she recently spent a year working for one of the premiere career transition organizations supporting those searching for new opportunities.

Luanne would like to offer what she has learned to those interested in giving their resume an update. She will be holding a one-hour workshop on crafting a resume that stands out and reflects the skills and talents that you bring to potential employers. If your resume needs some work, please feel free to join in. The only cost for attending is a sincere desire to ensure that your resume is a great one! Please contact Luanne at [lsshock@icloud.com](mailto:lsshock@icloud.com) or 412-737-1944 to let Luanne know you are interested.

**November 24<sup>th</sup>, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>—room 202**



Advent with Pastor Becky Branch-Trevathan: we will explore the biblical texts surrounding the birth of Jesus with *Light of the World* by Amy-Jill Levine. These stories open conversations around connections between the Gospel narratives and the Old Testament, the role of women in the first-century, the importance of Mary's visitation by Gabriel, and the implications of the Magnificat, the census and the stable, and the star of Bethlehem and flight to Egypt.

You may purchase a copy of the book directly from Amazon or Barnes and Noble, but you do not need to purchase the book to participate in the weekly discussions and bible study.

**December 1<sup>st</sup>—All Church Mission Engagement: Cookies and Cards for our Homebound Members**

## Advent and Christmas Worship at Sharon

**December 1<sup>st</sup>—Holy Communion, the Advent of Advent: Hope**

**December 8<sup>th</sup>—Peace in Advent**

**December 15<sup>th</sup>—Joy in Advent: Children's Christmas Pageant during Worship**

**December 22<sup>nd</sup>—Love in Advent**

**Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00pm—The Coming of the Christ: Lessons and Carols**

The Worship Committee will be decorating the church for Advent on Mon Nov 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. all volunteers are welcomed to deck the halls!

Christmas flowers will be here soon—look in the November worship bulletins for order forms.



We celebrate the Baptism of Bobby Eonta on October 27, 2019, son of Nick and Laura Eonta, brother to John.

With joy and thanksgiving, we welcome Bobby into Christ's church, for we are all one in Christ.

**May faith, hope and love abide in you and may God guide you in all that you do.**

*1 Corinthians 13:13*



## MUSIC NOTES

Dearest friends in Christ — it seems like just yesterday I answered God’s call to worship in your midst and the love you have shared with me these past few months has been overwhelming. My cup overflows with your kind words and encouragement. Many of you have asked about Katie, and I must ask you to continue prayers of healing as she still suffers with TMJ and jaw pain. The support of this church family has been invaluable during these difficult times — thank you from the bottom of my heart. Another thank you belongs to the wonderful volunteers singing in choir and ringing handbells. Their hard work and dedication has continued to inspire me in my own music making. Also, for those who attended my organ recital last month I am especially grateful — all music is a manifestation of God’s love and I appreciated this opportunity to share his love with you!

While the stores are still selling pumpkins and candy, Sharon is already ringing out the Christmas bells! For the past few weeks the children have been working diligently singing Christmas songs every Sunday before worship. This year the children’s Christmas program will be on December 15th during normal worship. For parents: your child should have taken home a CD with all the carols we will be singing. There will have two rehearsals before the 15th—a run-through during children’s church on December 1st and a **dress-rehearsal (full costumes) at 9:30 on December 8th**. Please contact me to RSVP for these rehearsal days—there will also be a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

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

This is the good news of great joy we will celebrate on Christmas Eve; not only with our regular church family but with many new guests and visitors. I pray that through our impassioned worship we will inspire them to come back again before Easter! For this reason I am encouraging you to become a temporary member of the choir only for Christmas Eve. I appreciate that it’s a serious commitment to be a part of our regular music program, which is why I am offering this possibility. Starting in the last week of November, we will begin choir rehearsals with Christmas music so that any temporary members can leave early. You do not need to read music! Lousy voices are welcome! Our Christmas eve anthems will include “Mary, Did You Know?”, “Do You Hear What I Hear?”, “Carol of the Bells”, Bach’s “Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring” and Handel’s “And the Glory of the Lord” from *The Messiah*. Please join us in singing these beautiful classics!

### Congregational Care

#### BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY

If you are not feeling well while you are in the church, please DO NOT get up to leave by yourself. We do not want you to pass out or fall and sustain further injuries. Tell the person next to you that you are not feeling well. That person should stand up and call for an usher to assist the unwell person. The usher will first ask if you want an ambulance to be called, the usher will ask if you are having chest pain, dizzy or having difficulty breathing. If you answer yes to any of these symptoms, the usher will ask for a Doctor or nurse from the congregation to elevate you. If the medical person feels you can leave the sanctuary, the usher will accompany to the narthex until you are feeling well enough to call a family member or go home.

The Deacon will be baking bread to deliver to our At Home members for Thanksgiving and then bringing these members a poinsettia in December to help celebrate the Christmas season. There will be Christmas card packets available in the church foyer intended to be sent by any one in our congregation to those who can no longer attend church due to age or illness. We hope many will join the Deacons in our effort to remember those who are no longer able to worship with us by sending cards or visiting them during the holidays.

## PRAYING AT SHARON

Prayer is an important part of our relationship with God – there are many ways at Sharon this relationship can be enriched. Here are three ways to engage in prayer corporately or privately.

**PRAYER MINISTRY** – for more than a year, 10-14 individuals have been meeting the first Monday of each month from 1:30-3PM in the Church Library to pray for our church, our community, our world. We pray aloud and silently for 30 minutes followed by study being led by a member of our group as we discuss a new chapter of “A Praying Life” by Paul Miller. We welcome others to join us monthly as we learn and grow together in prayer. For more information, contact Judy Lentz at [judyclentz@aol.com](mailto:judyclentz@aol.com) or Susanne Udvari at [susanneudvari@gmail.com](mailto:susanneudvari@gmail.com) .

**PRAYER TEAM** – led by Sara Kobak, more than 30 individuals receive names of individuals via e-mails to be lifted in prayer in the privacy of our own homes. These names are offered aloud on Sundays, through requests received through Sharon’s website, and from prayer team members. If you wish to join the prayer team, contact [sharonprayerchain@sharoncpc.com](mailto:sharonprayerchain@sharoncpc.com)

**PRAYER CARDS** – in the pew pockets are rainbow colored cards available to submit private prayer requests. These prayer cards should be placed in the offering plate and the ushers will assure the cards are given to Pastor Becky. Remember, Pastor Becky can always be reached on her cell phone directly at **407-949-2816** or emailed at [pastorbecky@sharoncpc.com](mailto:pastorbecky@sharoncpc.com) in times of urgent prayer needs.

**Worry is a conversation you have with yourself about things you fear cannot be changed.**

**Prayer is a conversation you have with God about how God is in all things...  
and how all things can change.**

