



First Presbyterian Church of Harborcreek

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November Newsletter Volume 2023, Issue 9

Church Leadership

Pastor.....Rev. Mike Wilson
Pastor Emeritus.....Rev. Sheldon "Tim" Logan
Music Director.....Chris Thomas
Organist.....Joyce Kriner
Secretary.....Mary Stewart
Custodian & Librarian.....Eileen Kriner
Treasurer.....Barbara Griffith

Committee Chairs—2023

Co-Clerks of Session.....Gil and Marlene Long
Membership Care &
Development..... Marlene Long
Mission/Outreach.....Ann Nesgoda
Barb Griffith
Nominating & Training.....Don Duckett
Mary Ellen Flowers
Personnel.....Sue Kellerman
Gil Long
Scott Shunk
Property..... Bob Kellerman
Dave Maille
Spiritual Formation.....Jennifer Wedzik
Stewardship & Finance.....Dave Maille
Bob Kellerman
Barb Griffith
Worship.....Scott Shunk
Gil Long
Jared Mosier
Recording Secretary.....Cindy Skladanowski

Deacons

Chairperson.....Bill Nesgoda
Vice-Chair.....Nancy Way
Secretary.....Nancy Way
Treasurer.....Peggie Smith
Caring Tree.....Nancy Way
Correspondence.....Joanne Scott
Flower Coordinator.....Sally Wakeley
Funeral Dinners.....Sue Beighley
Greeters/Liturgists.....Deacon of the Month

A Message from Pastor Mike...

Mary Louise and I have a friend from Pittsburgh named Amy Whipple. She is wonderful – and published – writer; she's really funny; and she's easily one of the most caring people I know. When she was a girl, she had an experience with a classmate where she learned what it means to be a foster parent and thought that that might be something she'd like to do when she grew up.

After moving to Pittsburgh to study and write she became a nanny, where she learned about loving a child unconditionally. Eventually Amy went through a nine-month certification process to become a foster parent. Fortunately for Amy, Pennsylvania is a state in which a single person can get certified. And fortunately for Pennsylvania, Amy was willing to take a child of any age, gender, race, temperament or physical ability.

So, a day after her 32nd birthday in 2015, Amy received a email from her caseworker that read "So I know this is kind of sudden, but is there any way you may consider taking a 10-month-old, biracial boy that has a seizure disorder as a placement this week? This is how the universe works sometimes, right!" Amy couldn't think of a reason not to say "yes." So she wrote back and asked "Why not?"



Things moved fast. Her caseworker responded with more about the child's recent seizure-related hospitalizations and that Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh would train her in administering medications and caring for his particular needs. The next day, Bethany arrived to finalize Amy's foster certification and gave her a printout about schizencephaly, the brain disorder from which the baby's seizures stemmed. The next morning another caseworker arrived with a portable crib, a stroller and a car seat.

That afternoon Amy went to Children's to pick him up. And just before she met him, the caseworker said that this "wee dude" had undergone neurosurgery a month prior to put a shunt in his head.

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And as Amy began posting on Facebook about this new chapter in her life, that's how we all knew him. He was Wee Dude or WD. Because of confidentiality laws, Amy couldn't disclose his real name or show us pictures of his face, so we got to know Wee Dude by the back of his head, a curled fist, a profile in shadow.

You can imagine that it's not easy to be Wee Dude or cheap. About \$800 a day is spent on feeding supplies, medication, daytime care, therapies and more. Amy is an expert at navigating the labyrinths of Social Security and Medicaid.

Amy and Wee Dude found love and support from friends and family and church. From doctors and physical therapists. Nurses and nurses and nurses. She has a village. And when Wee Dude's birth mother requested to terminate parental rights and for Amy to adopt him, Amy had moved from "why not?" to "Yes, of course."

Today Wee Dude is about nine. And after the adoption was finalized, we learned that his given name is Malakai. He wears big blue glasses even though his vision is so poor he's legally blind. He has magnificent curly brown hair, a huge, gap-toothed smile. On adoption day, the judge asked Amy, "Why do you want to adopt this child?" "Because I love him" was the answer that burst from her mouth. What a journey, from "Why not?" to "Because I love him."

I think about Mary of Nazareth. When told by an angel that she would conceive and give birth to a son, she replied in the stately King James, "be it unto me according to thy word." I might loosely render it, "Why not?" An angel shows up and says, "This is how the universe works sometimes, right?" What else might Mary say?

I suppose she might have said, "No thank you." I can't imagine God denying her the right of refusal. She might have done some pondering and said, "This can't work. What will my parents say? And Joseph... he's gonna have some questions." But those forces of community and family and faith – the village of Mary – gave her the confidence to say, "Be it unto me." "Why not?"

To my mind, "Why not?" is a fantastic starting place for all kinds of wonders. It doesn't claim that whatever comes next is going to be easy or perfect or pleasing to all. It simply says "I see no reasons for not giving it a try. We'll see what happens." I wonder what might happen, what our lives, our church, city, our world might be like if, when confronted with challenges or blessed with opportunities, we said, "Why not?"

And I get why we might say "No, never." We're afraid of what others may think, we're afraid of failure, we might doubt our abilities, question whether we have the resources. We fear change. Both people and institutions are prone to all and more of these doubts and fears. I have them, you have them.

Perhaps what we might learn from Mary of Nazareth – and maybe even from Amy of Pittsburgh – is that if something is of God, in service to God's vision of peace and justice, of community, creating joy and wonder, creating community and family, wholeness and happiness, we might risk surrendering our doubts and fears and insecurities and say simply, "Why not?"

I can only imagine what Mary experienced as she watched her boy grow up. Proud, probably, and afraid. Luke's story imagines that she knew from the start that he wasn't going to be simply a craftsman of fine furniture; that he, himself would have his own "be it unto me" moment. His own, "Why not?"

So that's my invitation to us as we prepare for the wonder and expectation Christmas. To be a little more willing to say, "Why not?" To be a little more open to possibility and change and to believe that our doubts and fear will be no match for anything that is of God, that is in service to God's people.

One of our favorite Christmas anticipations is Amy's Christmas card. It will arrive mid-December. It's typically featured a picture of her and Malakai – Wee Dude – enjoying what seems like a spontaneous laugh. The printed message is always simple: "Merry Christmas from the Whipples" followed by the year.

From "Why not?" to "The Whipples." From "Let it be unto me" to "With all my heart, I glorify the Lord."

May we all be open to such wonder.

Grace and peace,



Worship News...



Join us for our

Christmas Eve Celebration Of the birth of our Savior

on Sunday, December 24

at 5:00 p.m.

featuring Chancel Choir and
Handbell Choir favorites.



Media Ministry

We are asking for volunteers for the media ministry. Jeremy Stewart, Bill Nesgoda, and Jared Mosier have been bringing the streaming program to you for over 3 years now every Sunday.

Occasionally we get to have a Sunday off but those are rare. We would love to be able to spend time to join our families during the worship services also.

December Worship Leaders

	<u>Liturgists</u>	<u>Greeters</u>
December 3	Chris Thomas	Tiffany & Clifton Kephart
December 10	Gil Long	Marge Suter
December 17	Jasmine Mosier	Sue Resinger
December 24		
11:00 a.m.	Brian Griffith	Nancy McMally
5:00 p.m.	Brian Griffith	Bob & Sue Kellerman
December 31	Don Duckett	Jim & Izzy Lyon

Lectionary Readings

December 2023

Below are the readings suggested by the Revised Common Lectionary for this month.

December 3, 2023	1st Sunday of Advent
<i>Isaiah 64:1-9</i>	<i>Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 1:3-9</i>	<i>Mark 13:24-37</i>

December 10, 2023	2nd Sunday of Advent
<i>Isaiah 40:1-11</i>	<i>Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13</i>
<i>2 Peter 8-15a</i>	<i>Mark 1:1-8</i>

December 17, 2023	3rd Sunday of Advent
<i>Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11</i>	<i>Psalm 126</i>
<i>1 Thessalonians 5:16-24</i>	<i>John 1:6-8, 19-28</i>

December 24, 2023	4th Sunday of Advent
<i>2 Samuel 7:1-11</i>	<i>Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26</i>
<i>Romans 16:25-27</i>	<i>Luke 1:26-38</i>

	Christmas Eve
<i>Isaiah 9:2-7</i>	<i>Psalm 96</i>
<i>Titus 2:11-14</i>	<i>Luke 2:1-20</i>

December 31, 2023	1st Sunday of Christmas
<i>Isaiah 61:10-62:3</i>	<i>Psalm 148</i>
<i>Galatians 4:4-7</i>	<i>Luke 2:22-40</i>



News from Session

The Elder of the Month for December is Scott Shunk.

Emmanuel hosted a Music Night on November 18 in the Faith Café. Both Church Choirs and the Harmonizers performed, as well as small groups and individuals from both churches. A good time was had by all.

Harborcreek Presbyterian hosted the annual Community Thanksgiving service on November 19. Six local congregations participated.

Two services will be held on Christmas Eve: the regular service at 11 AM and an evening service at 5 PM.

The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for Deacons and Elders. Members are encouraged to nominate other members or volunteer themselves.

Respectfully submitted,

Gil Long, Clerk



We, as a church family, care deeply about you and your family and friends. Through our Prayer Chain we can surround those in need with prayer. As we reorganize our chain, we invite you to join us in two ways:

1. If you would like to join the ministry of the prayer chain and receive prayer requests either by phone or text message, please call Pat Feddersen at 814-899-6054 or Nancy McNally at 814-450-2577 and have your name added to the list.
2. And if you have a prayer request do not hesitate to call either Pat or Nancy with your need. You need to let them know what information can be shared and if you want to add a name to the prayer list in the bulletin and newsletter.



Recycle! Recycle! Recycle!

We are still receiving donations for special mission projects. This is an easy way to make a big difference in the lives of people in our community and around the world! Just collect and drop off at church.

♥ **Aluminum Cans** for the Dick Smith Fund to benefit community members with emergency needs.

♥ **Travel Sized Personal Care Products** to be given to the homeless at The Upper Room.

♥ **Cancelled Stamps** The person we were sending our cancelled stamps to is not doing that any longer, so we have researched and changed the recipients of our cancelled stamp ministry. We will have more information on who that is in the next newsletter.

♥ **Used Greeting Cards** to be sent to be sent to St Jude's Ranch for them to repurpose and sell in their gift shop and on their website. Please do not cut cards or change cards in anyway. They need them whole for them to be transformed.

Spiritual Formation...



Breakfast and a Movie

Breakfast and a Movie will finish the series "The Call" the first Sunday in December. Gil and Marlene Long are leading the discussion. The series is presented by Adam Hamilton, author of numerous books on Christian history, interpretation and action. Breakfast starts at 9:15, with the movie starting at 9:45. Come join us!



Wine and a Word is taking a break through December.

See the January newsletter for the new study beginning on January 7.

Swiss Steak Dinner Recap

Thank you again for everyone's help in putting together another successful Dinner with many reports of great food/a delicious meal. Wait times in the parking lot were longer than usual and will be addressed in April at our spring dinner after Easter. We served over 430 meals and our profit, after giving 10% to our Mission Committee (\$355), \$3,192 will go towards our Presbytery Mission Pledge and other local projects.



NEW FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

JOIN us on the Second Sunday of each month to celebrate the upcoming birthdays of the next month. Our first "Birthday Party" will be on January 14 immediately following worship. Come for some light refreshments and fellowship as we say HAPPY BIRTHDAY! And celebrate those born in January.

2023 LAKE ERIE PRESBYTERY PRAYER LIST

Churches & Pastors, Commissioned Pastors (CP),
Members-at-Large (MAL),
Honorably Retired (HR),
Validated Ministry (VM) & Other Leadership

December 3

Conneaut Lake, Sam Heagy, Preaching
Rev. Jim McCormack (HR)
C.P. Tim Olsen (HR)

December 10

Meadville, First, Rev. Dr. Dan Corll
District Pastor Rev. Mark Tawiah-Tutu
Rev. Brian Jensen, Pastor
Chereponi District, Upper Northern Presbytery,
10 Congregations

December 17

Bradford, First Rev. Katherine Randall
and Rev Rob Klouw, Co-pastors
Rev. Christopher Fujii (HR)
C.P. Dan McEldowney (HR)
Rev. Evon Lloyd (HR)

December 24

Missionaries of the PC(USA) throughout the world
Harmonsburg Church

December 31

Spouses of Lake Erie Pastors
All those needing prayers into the New Year

More News...

Available now!



A Commemorative Wendell August Forge Ornament

We have more of the Wendell August Forge ornaments available, depicting the First Presbyterian Church of Harborcreek. This collective ornament celebrates the rich history of our congregation and anticipates the exciting future that is upon us.

This two-inch handmade ornament is the perfect way to commemorate the church's years of worship and service to our awesome God.

The creations of Wendell August Forge, Grove City, PA embodies quality American craftsmanship. Each piece is specially handcrafted by their metalworkers, bringing a legacy of time-honored traditions from their family to ours.

The ornaments will be available at cost on Sundays before and after worship for \$14.00 each. For more information, please call Sue Kellerman at 717-586-8357.

Family Christmas Gathering

Family Christmas Gathering at
Emmanuel Presbyterian Church
3520 Perry Street, Erie

Sunday, December 10 12:30-2:30 p.m.

No Cost

Lunch, Crafts, and Games

Lunch at 12:30 with Santa at 2:00 p.m.

RSVPs appreciated; any questions contact

Marley Behrendt at 814-450-2156
or Amber Kreider at 814-873-3102



SPECIAL DONATION OPTIONS

During the year you may want to make a special donation in memory (or in honor) of someone.

Following are the many options available:

Memorial Fund: This is a special account to collect funds to be used within the local church for worship and education related expenses. Monies can be earmarked for special projects and sometimes a plaque is dedicated to the memory of a loved one.

Endowment Fund: Generally donations (often memorials) can be directed to this Fund that is managed by the Presbyterian Church USA Foundation and their New Covenant Mutual Funds. Yearly dividends are split between missions and capital improvements for our church.

Capital Improvement Fund (CIF/Building Fund):

As with most endowments, numerous options for bequests and investing are available.

Donations directed to this account are used to make payments towards any loans (none at this time) and to provide 'seed money' for future projects. Recent ones were exterior painting and maintenance of the church and manse and a new bell tower roof, paving of parking lot.

General Fund: Of course donations are gratefully accepted any time to help support the general running of the church and its programs.

Feel free to contact any member of the Stewardship & Finance Committee with your questions. Current members are Dave Maille, Kevin Graff, Bob Kellerman, Linda Blum, Lisa Baumgardner, Barb Griffith, Cindy Skladanowski.

Church Family News...



December Birthdays

- 1 Andrea Maille
- Chris Thomas
- Jennifer Fannin
- 5 Holly Hedlund
- 9 Linda Erickson
- 9 Mike Wilson
- 11 Mary Louise McCullough
- 22 Troy Barker
- 22 Ashley Palmer
- 24 Jim Bemis
- 26 Esther Noonan
- Patrick Cuneo
- 27 Barb Bemis
- 29 Katelyn Beighley
- 31 Joyce Kriner



December Anniversaries

- 28 Dave & Betsy Roseto



Prayer List: For those serving in the armed forces: Adam Bojarski (Suter). For the Lake Erie Presbytery & its leaders; for our pastor, Mike Wilson, for church members, family & friends, we pray.

If someone can be removed from the prayer list or if you have someone to add, please call or email the church office with the information.

Barb Bemis	Fannin Family	Yvonne Peters
Tom Blose	Joan Graham	Wilda Resinger
Claudia Brown	Megan Hetz	Sandy Spangler
John Brown	Judy Johnson	Rich Smith
Connie Carrier	Bridget Laughlan	Carl Steiner
Margaret Crider	David Lyon	Sandy Stewart
Robin Cuneo	Dick May	Marge Suter
Ed Ellwood	Mellish Family	Tina Wasiela
Dave English	Jeannie Pamula	Abigail Wilkinson

Remember Our Homebound

Some of you have asked about what you can do to keep connected to those who struggle to come to worship or participate in church activities. Listed below are some of those you could send a card or a note of encouragement.

Margaret Crider Twinbrook Room 212 3805 Field Street Erie, PA 16511	Jessie Dennison Wellmore Unit 4129 580 Robert Daniel Drive Daniel Island, SC 29492	Jacque Foust 8467 East Lake Rd. Erie, PA 16511
Dick May 6568 Iroquois Avenue Harborcreek, PA 16421	Peggy Nelson 2 Gibson St. Apt. 102 North East, PA 16428	Esther Noonan 7554 McGill Road Harborcreek, PA 16421
Yvonne Peters 3913 Dexter Avenue Erie, PA 16504	Wilda Resinger 5456 East Lake Road Barnabas Court South Room 120 Erie, PA 16511	Sandy Spangler 227 W. 22nd Street Room 9 Erie, PA 16509
Carl Steiner c/o Heather Steiner 4847 Tamarlac Lane Erie, PA 16505		
Ron Washe 4147 Bell Street Erie, PA 16511		



Church Office Hours

Pastor Mike is usually in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays around 9:00 a.m. If you have a pastoral emergency, please call Mike at 412-298-9196.

The secretary's regular office hours are: Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

There may be times that the hours may be changed; Please call the church office to verify.

Church Office Phone number:
814-899-1031
New Email Address:
office@hcpresbyterian.org
Website: hcpresbyterian.org



December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0f0e0;"> <p>Every Sunday Morning: Breakfast 9:15 a.m. Children's Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School/Movie 9:45 a.m. In-Person & Live Stream Worship 11:00 a.m.</p> </div>						
3 <i>First Sunday of Advent</i>	4 Women's AA 5:00 p.m.	5	6	7	8	9
10 <i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>	11 Deacon's Meeting 2:00 p.m. Women's AA 5:00 p.m.	12	13	14 Session Meeting 6:15 p.m.	15	16
17 <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i>	18 January Newsletter information is due! Women's AA 5:00 p.m.	19	20	21	22	23
24 <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 5:00 p.m.	25 <i>Birth of our Savior</i> Women's AA 5:00 p.m.	26	27	28	29	30
31 <i>First Sunday of Christmas</i>					<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0f0e0;"> <p>Elder of the Month: Scott Shunk 814-453-3803 Deacon of the Month: Sally Wakeley 814-397-4601</p> </div>	