



A Note from Pastor Norma Murphy

The Lord be with you all!

Have you ever waited in anticipation of someone arriving for a visit? Watching out of the window as the minutes slowly tick away? This is not how we wait for someone who comes often, but rather for that special, rare visitor.

Who might come to see you who might elicit such waiting? A parent or your child who does not live near you? A best friend who had moved far away? Someone who has been deployed in the military?

We begin this month in the season of Advent, which began on November 27. We will end this month halfway through the season of Christmas. (Yes, there IS a reason for singing the 12 Days of Christmas! It is a 12-day season running from December 25 through January 5.) Advent is a season of watchful waiting. Waiting NOT for the coming of Christmas, but for the coming of Jesus; waiting for Emmanuel, God-with-us!

How will you watchfully wait to welcome the Christ-child once more into your life? How will you watchfully wait to welcome the Lord when he comes in power and glory? How will you watchfully wait to welcome the King of kings?

And when Christmas does arrive, and Jesus with it, how will you celebrate?

With worship? I hope so. Because Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, and we will have worship actually on Christmas this year.

It will be a very informal service with the opportunity to sing all our favorite Christmas carols. We will meet around tables in Scheide Hall and enjoy toasty drinks and festive quick breads. We will celebrate the sacrament of Lord's Supper using a loaf swaddled and lying in a manger. Wear your new sweater or slippers, and let the children come in their pajamas. And let them bring a new toy to show and tell.

My home church began having Christmas morning worship every year, no matter what the day of the week, over 30 years ago. It is my family's favorite service of the year. It has been my son's favorite service since he was a small boy.

What memories will you and your family have of the beginning of the Christmas season this year? It can be of fun and laughter and love with family only, or it can include the joyful worship of the birth of Jesus with your church family. I invite you to think about what it might mean to carve that hour out and offer it as your gift to God for the gift of Jesus.

I do not want you to feel guilty if you do not come. I would guess that most won't find their way here that particular Sunday morning. But I hope that you will at least sing some carols or read the Christmas story from scripture (Luke 2:1-20) or say a prayer of thanksgiving and welcome at home. And remember that Christmas lasts 12 days, not just one.

The watchful waiting has begun! How will you end the waiting? Will you see the beloved Christ-child at the end? I pray so!

Grace and peace, and a blessed, joyous Christmas to all!

Norma

Session News

Your Session met to discern God's leading for our congregation on Monday, October 24, 2016. During the meeting the spiritual leaders of the church:

- Approved Study Leave Tuesday to Thursday, November 15-17, 2016, and vacation (1 week plus holidays) December 26, 2016 – January 3, 2017, for the pastor
- Heard the reports of the various committees
- Buildings and Grounds has received bids to trim a tree on Walnut Street
- Christian Education shared that Eryn Lavery will be attending the national APCE (Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators) in Denver this January
- Congregational Care Ministry now has 4 people to cover the emergency phone and is working on a notebook of 'who to call when ...' for their use
- Heard a report from the Seniors Committee on upcoming outings in November to Tamarac Lake and Tara-A Country Inn, Sharon, PA
- Heard a report from the Stewardship Committee and learned that Commitment Sunday will be November 20, 2016
- Heard a report from Mike Wonderling about safety issues: the need for a fire escape plan, staff training for CPR and using fire extinguishers and the possibility of getting a smoke detector system in place
- Heard a reminder from our Clerk of Session, Gloria Taylor, that she will fulfill her term on Session at the end of this year and we will need to elect a new Clerk
- Elected Sandy Smith as Elder Commissioner to the Presbytery of Lake Erie meeting on Saturday, November 19, 2016

Upcoming Meetings

Nominating Committee – Thursday, December 1, 7 p.m., Conference Room
Christian Education - Wednesday, December 14, 11:30 a.m., Conference Room
Heritage Committee - Sunday, December 18, 12 noon, Conference Room
Worship Committee - Sunday, December 18, 12 noon, Emerson Parlor

Advent and Christmas Events

Advent “Christmas Joy” Collection

During the Advent Season, we will be collecting an offering called “Christmas Joy.” This offering will be given to the Presbyterian Church (USA) to help assist retired pastors who are finding life hard after their many years of service. Each Sunday, an envelope will be in the bulletin for your convenience. Give what you can and help with this wonderful special offering.

Advent Candle Lighting Tradition

Advent is here, and every year during this time we ask individuals, families, and groups of the church to honor us by lighting the lovely Advent wreath designed and constructed by Bill Brady. This year, we are asking different weekly program groups from our church to light the candles each Sunday.

Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service set for 7 p.m.

Join us at 7 p.m. on Christmas Eve for a service of Lessons and Carols, along with a traditional candle lighting service. The offering in this service will go to Associated Charities.

Childcare will be provided in the Children’s Pavilion beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Poinsettias

You can purchase a Christmas poinsettia in memory of or in honor of a loved one or friend by completing the form on the last page of this newsletter, by picking one up in the church office, or by calling the office at 827-3665. Order deadline is Sunday, December 4. See second to last page for order form.

Hanging of the Greens - Wednesday, December 7 at 4 p.m.

We will hang the greens in our Sanctuary Wednesday, December 7, beginning at 4 p.m. Come help decorate the sanctuary and stay for dinner. Donations of fresh fruit for baskets to our shut-ins can be brought to the church office by December 4.

Christmas Treat for Sunday School Classes to be Distributed Sunday, December 11

The Lee Green Class will sponsor the Christmas candy treat for our Sunday school classes which will be distributed on December 11. Since prices for candy ingredients have skyrocketed again this year, Mr. Gadsby is hoping that folks will be able to contribute generously. Anyone wishing to contribute to this project is invited to mail a check marked “Christmas Treat” to Mr. Jack Gadsby, Class Treasurer, P.O. Box 217, Titusville, PA. 16354.

Sock and Mitten Tree

The Sock and Mitten Tree can be found in the Narthex, by the Franklin Street entry and is waiting for new mittens, gloves, socks, hats, and scarves to decorate its branches. All donations will be passed on to Associated Charities on December 19 to be shared with others in our community.

Sunday School Opportunities

New “Seekers” Sunday School Class Underway

The Bible. So much wisdom. So many, many questions.

This adult Bible study, led by Pastor Norma, is designed for the seeker in all of us – that spiritual side of us that's a little curious or maybe even yearning to better understand faith, the Bible, and Christianity. Meeting 9:45-10:45 Sunday mornings in the pastor's study, the Seekers group is open to anyone college-aged or older. (Pitt Students – this is a great opportunity to broaden what you study in Campus Ministry with Tom!) Currently, the group is reading through Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians. If you have a Bible or Bible app feel free to bring it; but, if not, there are plenty of Bibles to borrow at the church.

Whether you're seeking to know just a little about Christianity or have been a life-long follower of Christ, the Seekers' class will help you dive deeper into God's Word.

Available Adult Sunday School Classes

Did you know that, besides our Sunday School classes for K4-12 grades, we also have classes for parents who might want to get plugged into a class, while their children are busy learning about The Bible and God's love. We currently have three classes that are open for any adult to attend, and they are:

1. Commissioned Women – This class meets in the conference room, and is currently studying from “The Present Word.”
2. Lee Green – This class meets in Scheide Hall. They are currently studying the Gospel of Luke.
3. The Seeker's Class meets in Pastor Murphy's office. They are currently studying II Corinthians.

Christian Education

Women's Bible Study

This group will not meet on December 27.

This month the Women's Bible Study is concluding a study on the parables of Jesus. From the redemptive love of the prodigal's father, to the cost of giving all to be disciples of Jesus, we have been challenged to see ourselves in his teachings and how we are living out the beauty of the Kingdom of God.

The only materials needed are your Bible and a heart ready to fellowship. Childcare is provided.

Contact Shannon Grinder at 564-1330 if you have any questions. Hope to see you there!

Transformation Tuesdays

Transformation Tuesdays will not meet Tuesday, December 27, 2016. Merry Christmas!

Transformation Tuesdays, after-school program for children in K-5 through 5th grades, meets each Tuesday. Walkers escort children from Main Street Elementary to the church for snacks, Christian Education, crafts, games, and children's choir. Consider joining us! Registration forms are available in the church office. Check out our Facebook Page at Transformation Tuesdays at First Presbyterian Church for more pictures and updates about our program.

Questions? Contact Filippa Duke, who will be working with the program in the fall, at the church office phone or by email at fduke.presby@gmail.com.

Note: After-school Programs follow the School Calendar. No School – No After-School Program

Transformation Tuesday's **Advent Open House**



Tuesday, December 20, 2016
4:00 p.m. Scheide Hall

Friends, family members, and church family
are invited to an open house *featuring*
Music by the Children's Choirs, artwork, and light refreshments to
celebrate the children of Transformation Tuesdays.

Men of First Breakfast Bible Study

This group will not meet on December 28, 2016.

All men from our church, their friends, and friends of the community are welcome to attend each Wednesday morning's breakfast/Bible study held in Scheide Hall at 7 a.m. A delicious breakfast is always served along with good fellowship, and great conversation on a passage from the Bible. Any questions can be directed to facilitator, Tom Newcombe.

New Prayer and a Pint Bible Study to Begin January 12, 2017

With the busy holiday season right around the corner, the Thursday Prayer and a Pint Bible Study which meets at the Blue Canoe twice a month will take a break from meeting until after the New Year.

The new session will begin January 12, 2017 at 7 p.m. at the Blue Canoe, and will be studying the book of Ephesians. Our regular table is in the far back corner of the dining room area. Anyone interested in participating in this ministry - or just curious about this public witness – is welcome to attend. Contact person is Jesse Lavery and can be reached via email at jesse@jesselavery.com with any questions.

Moms' Small Group to Meet

A small group for moms of young children is meeting every other Thursday from 7-8 p.m. at the home of Mrs. Shannon Grinder. Moms will take turns bringing a devotion/Bible passage to share with the group, and children are welcome to attend. See Shannon Grinder or Eryn Lavery for more information.

Christian Ed Corner

Spotlight On: JOSEPH FITZ

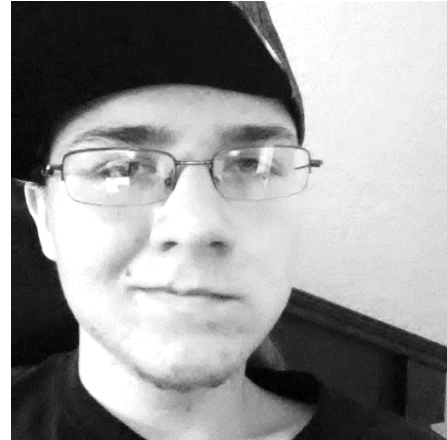
Name: Joseph Fitz

Age: 17

Grade/School: 12th grade at Titusville High School

Favorite Food: Subway

Favorite Music: Broadway



What extra-curricular activities do you like to do?

I'm the Drama Club President at THS, and I like to sing and beat box.

What are three things that you absolutely love?

I love beat-boxing, singing, and theatre.

What are your plans for after graduation?

Go to college for Visual and Performing Arts, hopefully at University of Pittsburgh in Greensburg.

If someone wanted to get to know the real you, what's something you would tell them?

I make weird noises with my mouth.

What is one (or more) thing you want to ask God?

Why are there so many different types of Christians?

****NOTE:** Each month a different young person from our church family will be chosen at random to be spot-lighted. We'll share basic information, along with a photo, of that young person with the hope that you will take time to introduce yourself to that child or youth when you see them in church, and maybe even comment on what you read about them in The Tower. It is the CE Committee's prayer that we build up the Body of Christ at First Presby, from the very youngest to the very wisest, to bring glory to God.

Youth Group News

New time for 6 -12 grade youth groups

As of October 30, middle and high school youth groups have combined into one youth group from 6-8 p.m. All 6 -12 grade students are invited to join us in the prayer room Sunday evenings for prayer, fellowship, and fun!

(PLEASE NOTE: Youth group will be on Christmas break December 25,2016 - January 8, 2017. Our first meeting will be January 15, 2017.)

Youth, Families Invited to Serve: A Christmas Mission Tradition Carries On

First Presby will once again be teaming up with Associated Charities in Titusville this year to meet the needs of our local community by participating in their Christmas food/gift distribution on December 23 from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Serving includes filling bags of non-perishables, sorting and distributing wrapped gifts, and hand-delivering bags of fruit outside to families' cars. Wear comfortable shoes! Students in grades 6-12 are invited to serve, and any interested older adults or families with elementary-school should speak to Eryn Lavery about possibly participating. (Due to safety considerations, we ask that all helpers under the age of 5 wait a couple of years before serving in this particular ministry.)

A set number of spots will be set aside for our middle and high school youth. Due to limited facility space at AC we ask that all participants sign up in advance on a first-come, first-served basis beginning December 4 in the church office. T ASD students will need to get a trip form from their school office and submit it to the school for approval before December 23. (Without an approved trip form turned in, it counts as an illegal absence.)

Spiritual Guides:

Rock-Star Volunteers Make a Huge Difference to Kids in Less Than 1 Hour/Week!

Q: What is short, bouncy, and full of smiles?

A: Mary, Willa, Milo, Sagel, Ty... and every other Transformation Tuesday kiddo right after their weekly one-on-one time in the prayer room.

“Spiritual Guides” - aka adult volunteers from the congregation – have a new role to play this year. Where, in the past, our Guides served primarily as an extra pair of hands and eyes to assist program leaders with activities and crafts, this year they take a more active role in the spiritual development of each child.

The Tuesday program draws between 15-20 children into our church every week, about half of whom are unchurched. Right after school the children are walked over from Main Street by Spiritual Guides and fed the all-important after-school snack. Following the snack, they are divided by age and taken upstairs to music and story time. It is during story time that Spiritual Guides invite children one at a time to the prayer room, where they talk about their joys and concerns, lead the children in prayer, and then escort them back to the group and invite the next child. A craft/activity time back with the whole group rounds out the 2-hour program.

While it may seem such a simple thing to do – pray with a few kids each week – the impact is immediate and obvious. The children returning from the prayer room have a distinct “hitch in their giddy-up,” having felt heard, loved, and covered in prayer by a caring adult. God is definitely up to something Tuesday afternoons at First Presby!

Church Mission Statement

First Presbyterian Church

A Christian community, welcomes all people and equips them to proclaim, witness, and teach the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and caring service.

This Month's Ushers

Ray Crawford, Toby Cressman, Derek Rapp, Shaun Zimmerman

Worship and Music

Advent begins on November 27! We look forward to each Sunday in Advent as First Presbyterian Church celebrates Christ's coming with joyful anticipation and hope. The Christmas Eve and Christmas morning services will be moving, especially the communion on Christmas morning.

Pastor Norma is looking for another volunteer for the liturgy writing group. If this is of interest to you, please contact her for details.

Communion will next be served, by intinction, at our worship service on Sunday, December 4. At the Lord's Table, we are renewed and empowered by the memory of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and promise to return and we are sealed in God's covenant of Grace.

Blessings and Peace!

Sandy Smith, Moderator

Music Ministries

A Note from the Choirmaster

There has always been something special about Christmas carols, something comforting, something warm, something inviting. Whether you attend church every Sunday throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons or only attend one of the Christmas services, I'm certain that the singing of carols, some old and some new, is one of the things you find yourself anticipating with great fervor. This is something that we as a community of Christian believers do quite well; this singing is part of who we are, what we are about! However, I do wonder if you've ever stopped to think about why these carols, when we hear them playing on the radio or in the store, or when we sing them in church have such a positive effect on us? The first is that praising God in word and song is a tradition that extends back to the very first people of faith. We know from ancient writings that this is something humanity has been doing since it first found its voice. David wrote in the psalms "make a joyful noise to the Lord" and "sing a new song of praise." When we participate in the singing of these carols we find that our worship and praise aren't internal; they become something that we are doing with all of our being, our bodies, as well as our minds and our souls!

Secondly, we should note how the tradition of this particular type of singing came about. Congregational hymn singing stems from the reformation. At this time, the music was given back from the well-trained choir to the congregation. Carol singing also includes another tradition: Wassailing. In the days when door-to-door soliciting was illegal, people would go around singing Christmas carols in exchange for food or charitable gifts. That is where the song "We Wish you a Merry Christmas," containing lines such as "bring us some figgy pudding" and "we won't go until we get some," found its beginning. During the period of Victorian hymn writing, the words of Christian composers were added due to the efforts of the church. Carol singing for charity was a way in which everybody in the congregation could get involved.

I find that carol singing is so special to us because it allows us to express our Christian love and concern for other people, and that, in my humble opinion, is true charity.

So this December I extend this call to you, the call to join your voices with the choir and sing these great carols of the faith, inviting all to accept and receive the unwavering and everlasting Love that is God.

Peace in Christ,
Nathaniel Licht

Children's Choirs I and II

The Children's Choirs I and II will lead worship on Sunday, December 18, 2016. We will meet at 10:30 a.m. to rehearse in the Sanctuary. There will be an Advent Open House on Tuesday, December 20, 2016, at 4:00 p.m. All are invited! Transformation Tuesdays will not meet Tuesday, December 27, 2016. Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

Memorial Handbell Choir

The Memorial Handbell Choir will lead worship on Sunday, December 18, 2016. We will meet at 9:15 a.m. to rehearse in the Sanctuary. *There will be no bell rehearsal on December 20 or December 27.* Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

Presbyterian Women's News

Potato Bar and Cookie Sale Fundraiser Planned to Raise Money for New Hymnals

The Presbyterian Women will be hosting a fundraiser luncheon and cookie sale on Saturday, December 4, immediately following the morning worship in Scheide Hall. The luncheon cost will be \$6.00 per person (children 6 years-old and younger free), this includes a baked potato and a variety of toppings, a brownie, and a beverage.

We will also be having a cookie sale at the same time as the luncheon, so bring extra money so you can take home some delicious goodies.

All funds raised will go towards new hymnals for our sanctuary.

Campus Ministries

College Fellowship Meetings Here at the Church

The College Fellowship Meetings are held each Sunday in Scheide Hall at 8:30 p.m. All from the college community are welcome to participate in this ministry. Our hope is to achieve an atmosphere of spiritual growth and exploration and support, foster, and challenge those in the college community to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Any questions speak with Tom Newcombe.

This group will be taking a short break during the Christmas holiday, beginning on December 17, 2016, to January 4, 2017. Merry Christmas!!

Senior Adult Ministry (SAM's Club) Ministry

SAM's Club Needle Crafts and Cards

Each Wednesday, join the SAM's Club group for an afternoon of needle crafting.
Each Thursday, join the SAM's Club group for an afternoon of card playing.
Both events take place in Emerson Parlor at 1 p.m.

SAM's Club Lunch and a Movie

On Friday, December 2, at 12 noon, in Scheide Hall, join the SAM's Club for Lunch and a Movie. Soup will be served, followed by a movie yet to be determined.

Lunch and a Movie will meet again on Friday, December 16; then every other Friday.

All those 55+ are invited to participate in all SAM's Club events. If you have a suggestion for a movie, would like to make the soup for the day, or simply need a ride, don't hesitate to call.

Contact Tom Newcombe if you have any question regarding the SAM's Ministry.

Triple F

"Thankmas Party" Planned

Triple F (**F**un, **F**aith, and **F**ellowship) will host a "Thankmas Party" on December 11, at 6:30 p.m., in Scheide Hall. This event is open to adults 18 year and over, plus their families. (Note: Children must be accompanied by an adult.).

The concept of a "Thank-mas Party" came about by throwing together our two most favorite holidays **Thanksgiving** and **Christmas**.

So for this "Thankmas Party," we will first share a delicious turkey dinner together with all of the trimmings; then it will be followed by song singing, laughter, and possibly a gift to give away.

To participate in this event, each family unit is asked to bring a salad, vegetable, or dessert to share with dinner. This year, instead of getting a gift, we are asking that attendees bring a gift card, of their choosing, to the party. These cards will then be given to The Associated Charities to help needy families in our community at this time of year.

If you would like to come to this fun evening, sign up in the church office by December 4. Terry Davitt is the contact person and can answer any question, you may have.

Birthdays

Katie Witosky	1	Dorothy Long	12	Dori Wescoat	23
Kelly McDonald	3	Willie Stephens	13	John Schultz	24
Gloria Taylor	6	Kay Davitt	13	Stacey Root	25
Jan Schulz	7	Phil Atteberry	17	Casey Root	25
Mary Gaiser	7	Monica Chatham	17	Patricia Fitz	26
Carol Hughes	7	Jamie Peebles	17	Bob Davitt	28
Pennie Winkler	9	Derek Rapp	17	Vickey Hauptman	29
Judy Maseman	9	Amanda Culver	17	Lisa Repasky	31
Betty Sleeth	9	Nancy Clark	18	Tara Nichols	31
Nancy Funk	10	B. J. Root	19		
Rochelle Cressman	11	John Clark	22		

If we have missed your birthday – please let us know.

Flowers

Chancel Flowers

If you would like to place flowers in the Sanctuary on any Sunday throughout the year, let Terry Davitt know at the church office (827-3665) by the Wednesday prior to them being in the sanctuary. This way she can place the dedication in the bulletin.

Community

LOVE In The Name Of Christ to Sponsor “Garden of Hope” Course

“Garden of Hope” is a twelve (12) week course, sponsored by Love INC, being held at The Church of Christ starting Tuesday, January 10, 2017, at 6 p.m. Childcare will be provided. Participants can register at Love INC by calling (814)827-4882. Registration must be received by Friday, December 16. This transformational ministry is open to clients, congregations, and staff

A Food Pantry

With the holidays fast approaching, The Food Pantry could really use our help. A donation of a food item or a gift cards is always welcome.

Boy Scout Troop Meets on Mondays

Each Monday at 6 p.m., in Scheide Hall, all boys in grades Kindergarten - 5th, who are interested in joining a great club for boys, are invited to come and check it out. Any questions should be directed to Ashley Peterson at 493-3852.

**"Christmas began in the heart of God.
It is complete only when it reaches
the heart of man."**

This Christmas place a poinsettia plant in our church sanctuary in memory or in honor of your loved ones.

Please fill in this order form and place it in the offering plate or bring it to the church office along with your check made out to The First Presbyterian Church. Order forms must be received by Sunday, December 4, 2016.

There are two sizes of quality, potted poinsettias available to you through the church at special, low prices. The poinsettia plants will be delivered directly to the church from Acorn Acres.

\$13.00 – Single (1) stem potted poinsettia

Red _____ White _____

\$24.00 – Triple (3) stem potted poinsettia

Red _____ White _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Given by: _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

I will take my plant home on Christmas Eve or

pick it up the week after Christmas.

Please throw it away.

Contact us:

First Presbyterian Church

216 North Franklin Street, Titusville, PA 16354
(814) 827-3665 firstpresby216@verizon.net

Visit us on the web at: www.titusvillefirstpresbyterian.com

Staff:

Kai Baldwin, Accompanist

Vickie Corey, Housekeeper

Theresa Davitt, Administrative Assistant

Email: tdavitt.presby@gmail.com

Dr. Filippa Duke, HandBell/

Children's Choir Director

Email: fduke.presby@gmail.com

Kelly Evans, Sexton

Eryn Lavery, Christian Education Director

Email: eryn@erynlavery.com

Nathaniel Licht, Organist/Choir Director

Email: mistalicht@gmail.com

Rev. Norma Prina Murphy, Interim Pastor

Email: prnorma93@gmail.com

Tom Newcombe, Sr. Adult Ministry Leader

Email: tnewcombe.presby@gmail.com

Heather Wilson, Assistant Treasurer

Email: hwilsonfinance@gmail.com

Cut along dotted line