



The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
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Rev. Ryan Irmer, Pastor
Director of Music: Shelley Zuckerman

December 2016

Waiting and Hoping Both For the Future and in the Present

Recently, I read an article about an old coaching friend of mine, Geoff, that brought a giant smile to my face. He's not actually old, in fact he's the same age as me. We met nearly 20 years ago as young, college graduates, who were both aspiring to become Head Basketball coaches at the collegiate level. Geoff had just received his first job as an assistant coach at a small Christian university, California Lutheran University. He has been there for 21 years working for the same head coach the entire time! Staying at one place in college athletics for this long is about as rare of an occurrence as it is my daughter, waking up and making her bed on her own; it hardly ever happens! Just as a comparison, my first four years as an assistant basketball coach found me at four different colleges. Yet Geoff is a rare breed in that he has chosen to remain at the same university this entire time.

Did Geoff ever abandon his hope of one day becoming a college basketball coach? Absolutely not! But he waited patiently, was loyal to his head coach for over two decades, and in the meantime, made a positive impact on the lives of many of the players that arrived as Freshmen, were taught how to play basketball the right way, learned life lessons that would benefit their lives on and off the court, formed lasting friendships, and then eventually became college graduates. While Geoff was waiting for his opportunity, he was working tirelessly to make a positive impact right where he was in the lives of those who were surrounding him. Well, a few weeks ago, the long-time head coach that Geoff had been working for, decided to step away from coaching and Geoff was named as their next Head Coach. Geoff's hope and dream has become a reality.

During the season of Advent, we wait patiently for the special night when we celebrate Christ's birth with friends and family. As Christians, we also wait patiently for Christ's return, when He will make all things right. Yet as we wait, we remain active and engaged. We worship, we pray, we study God's Word, and we love all those around us.

Advent is a season of waiting, but it not a time of complacency.

Advent is a time of stillness and solitude, but it is not a time of isolation.

Advent is a time to prepare; it is not a time of apathy.

My hope and prayer for you this Advent season is that as you wait, that you remain connected and engaged with God and those around you. And that during Advent, you experience the hope, the peace, the love, and the joy that comes in and through Jesus Christ.

Your pastor,

Ryan

If I Could Only Become a Bird

Paul Harvey tells the story about a family on Christmas Eve. This family had a tradition where the Mother and children would go to the Christmas Eve service, and the Father would stay home and read the paper. When the family returns home from church, they would all gather to open up their presents.

The Father was not an evil man, but he just couldn't believe in the childhood stories anymore of God coming as a baby in a manger. As the family left for church, he opened up the evening paper and began to read by the fireplace.

Suddenly, he heard tapping on the window. It was a bird flying against the glass of his window trying to get out of the snow into the warmth of his home. The man had compassion on the bird, and he went outside, hoping to bring it in.

As he approached the bird, the bird just flew against the window even harder. Pretty soon, the bird flew into the bushes below the window, half frozen, yet too afraid to be caught by this huge man. The more the man tried to reach for the bird, the more the bird flew frantically into the snow and thorns of the bushes.

After a few minutes in the cold and seeing the bird continue to injure itself, the man yelled out in frustration, "Stupid bird, can't you understand that I'm trying to help?" The man paused and thought, "If only you understood you wouldn't fly away ... if only ... if only I could become a bird, and get you to understand."

Just then, the church bells rang, as they always have on the hour. But when the man heard the bells this time, he fell to his knees and began to cry, saying, "Oh, God, I didn't understand. Oh, God, I didn't understand."

God's Son came in human form that we might understand from where we have come, for what reason we were separated and how we could be restored to God.



*The coming of Christ by way of a Bethlehem manger seems
strange and stunning. But when we take Him out of the manger
and invite Him into our hearts,
then the meaning unfolds and the strangeness vanishes.*

C. Neil Strait

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

PW will plan to meet on Thursday, December 15th at 12 noon. Please bring a sandwich and we will provide dessert. Prepare for the 4th lesson in our curriculum, "According to John." Our references are Gospel of John chapters 1; 9; and 10. Key scripture will be John 9: 1-7

Please let me know if you plan on attending. Thanks.

Marilyn Stebbins
(609-587-7986)

SESSION ACTIONS – NOVEMBER 16, 2016 MEETING

At its meeting on November 16:

- the session learned that the minute book and church registry were reviewed by the presbytery on November 10 and approved without exception;
- voted to send a donation to Slackwood Volunteer Fire Company;
- received the resignation of Bill Ward as church treasurer;
- voted to allot funds from the Membership & Outreach budget for Thanksgiving dinner to be held at the church;
- learned that the lines in the parking lot would be re-painted;
- authorized the use of the church bus to transport the Kingston Church mission work group to and from JFK Airport at the end of January/early February.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOOD DRIVE

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the food drive conducted by the youngest Sunday school class in November. The children used the food drive as a way of expressing thanks to God for all the blessings of their lives. Enough food was collected to almost fill a pick-up truck and all of the food was donated to the food pantry at Christ Presbyterian Church in Hamilton. Your support of the programs of our youngest members is very much appreciated.



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT FOR EVERYONE!!! DECEMBER 18th

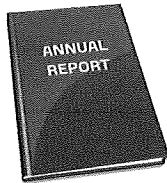
Our pageant time for everyone is almost here! The pageant committee has been busy making costumes for adults and children. This year you again will have an opportunity to be an active participant in the nativity scene. At **9:30 a.m.** the morning of December 18th we will have our "Messy Church" program where all ages come together. During that time, we will help people dress in costumes. If you are not attending that program, **please plan to arrive at 10:00 a.m. that Sunday** for the 10:30 a.m. church service. In fellowship hall we will have costumes and people to help you get dressed for the nativity story. There will be costumes for angels, shepherds, various barn animals, and townspeople. Once the worship service begins, a narration based on the Gospel of Luke's telling of Jesus' birth is shared with the congregation. At various breaks in the narration, while the congregation sings a corresponding song, folks with certain costumes will go to the front of the sanctuary and help create a live nativity scene. There will be instructions in the bulletin when your group is to join the nativity scene. **THERE ARE NO SPEAKING PARTS.** If you only want to sit in the pews and watch the story, that is okay too. We hope you will mark your calendars for this special worship service and be a part of the Christmas spirit of joy, hope, peace, and love.



Graham really wanted to play Joseph, but deep down he knew what part he'd get again!

ANNUAL REPORT DEADLINE

If you are a committee chairperson, moderator or treasurer of a committee or ministry group, or represent Slackwood at any church connected program, you need to submit a report to be included in the annual report to the congregation. All reports must be in the hands of the clerk of session no later than **January 13, 2017**. You can submit your report by handing it to Carol Belles or by mailing it to her, or you can send it via email to carolb125@aol.com.



Remember – the annual meeting of the congregation will follow worship on Sunday, January 29, 2017.

CHURCH TREASURER

Thank you to Bill Ward for his service as church treasurer. Bill is a very busy person, and now that Carol has retired, Bill & Carol hope to travel more than usual. With all that, Bill found it best to resign as treasurer. We appreciate the time he served in this position and his dedication to the church.

At the request of session, Ginger Baker has agreed to now serve as treasurer. We are grateful to her for assuming this new responsibility and look forward to her service.

PROPERTY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the committee will take place following worship on Sunday December 11, 2016. We will be discussing items that can be completed over the winter. If you have any suggestions for these topics contact Bill Mansmann at 609-651-1321 or feel free to attend the meeting and share your thoughts.

ADVENT SOCIAL – December 10th

We will be celebrating the season of Advent on Saturday, December 10 at 5:00 p.m. at the home of Anand and Lilly Veevaraj, 22 Colonial Lake Drive in Lawrenceville. Please plan to join us for good food and some holiday carol singing. If you have not already signed up on the sheet provided in fellowship hall, or if you need a ride, please let Carol Belles know (609-989-8773).

MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

The Men of the church are invited to join in our breakfast meeting at 9:00 am at the church on Friday December 16, 2016. We will have bagels for breakfast provided by Dirk Hofman! Something different! Following our meal we will continue our fellowship by completing small jobs around the church. Mark your calendar and join us on December 16, 2016!

MLK SERVICE DAY – JANUARY 2017



The Membership & Outreach Committee is working on plans for a service project on Martin Luther King Day in January. This will be a "hands on" opportunity to serve others in the community. Watch for details and plan to participate.

2017 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Offering envelopes for 2017 will be available on Sunday December 18, 2016 for pickup in the church sanctuary. If a set has not been created for you and you would like one, contact Bill Mansmann at 609-651-1321 and he will be glad to furnish you with a set of envelopes.

2017 PER CAPITA FEE

The 2017 Per Capita fee is \$33.00 for each member of each church in the Presbytery. These funds support the work of the greater church – Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. It is important that each member of our church participate and contribute their Per Capita Fee. Any shortfall in receiving the Per Capita fee is paid from the general funds of the church that reduces funds available for other needs within Slackwood Church.

NEW BABY

Congratulations to the Ward family on the birth of Carol and Bill's first great-grandchild, Maddox, on December 2nd. Maddox weighed in at 7 lbs 6 oz, and she is the daughter of Ricky and Christa Nuel, and the grandchild of Wendy and Rick Nuel. Our sincere blessings are extended to the happy family for this very special event.



Slackwood Presbyterian Church

December 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:30 PM AA Mtg	2	3 8:30 AM AA Meeting
4 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship and Communion 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	5 7:30 PM AA Mtg	6 6:30 PM Advent Study	7 6:30 PM Christian Education Committee	8 6:30 PM AA Mtg 7:45 PM DA Mtg	9	10 8:30 AM AA Meeting 5:00 Advent Social
11 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 12:00 Personnel Committee Mtg. 12:00 Property and Finance Committee Mtg. 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	12 7:30 PM AA Mtg	13 6:30 PM Advent Study	14	15 12:00 – PW Mtg 6:30 PM AA Mtg 7:45 PM DA Mtg	16 9:00 AM Men's Pancake Breakfast	17 8:30 AM AA Meeting
18 9:30 AM "Messy Church" 10:00 Preparation for Christmas Pageant 10:00 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship and Pageant 11:45 AM Deacons Meeting 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	19 7:30 PM AA Mtg	20 6:30 PM Advent Study 7:00 PM Membership and Outreach Committee	21 7:00 PM Session Mtg.	22 6:30 PM AA Mtg 7:45 PM DA Mtg	23	24 8:30 AM AA Meeting 8:00 PM Christmas Eve Service
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10:30 AM Worship 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	26 7:30 PM AA Mtg	27	28	29 6:30 PM AA Mtg 7:45 PM DA Mtg	30	31 8:30 AM AA Meeting NEW YEAR'S EVE

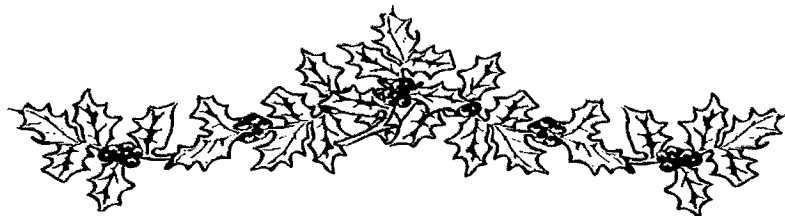
*Upcoming Events: January 16 – Martin Luther King service day
January 29 -- Annual Meeting of the Congregation*

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Merry Christmas and Blessings for the New Year!!

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Newsletter of the Slackwood Presbyterian Church