



The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
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Rev. David Bowman, Interim Pastor
Starr Alleyne, Director of Family Ministries

December 2023

INTERIM PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

The Advent Season – this time of waiting and preparation before Christmas - brings a heightened feeling that something new and life changing is coming. Like a faint sound in the distance drawing nearer. Like the waiting at the airport to be reunited with loved ones as they emerge from the terminal. Like the moment right before the sun peeks out from below the horizon. Like a promise about to come true. Something is coming that will remind us of the depth of God's love for us. Presbyterian Pastor and author Frederick Buechner writes:



“For a second you catch a whiff in the air of some fragrance that reminds you of a place you’ve never been and a time you have no words for. You are aware of the beating of your heart. The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment.”

Advent means something life-changing is coming. Yet amid all the frenetic end-of-year chaos, it's so easy to squander these precious moments of waiting. Many of us know all too well what it's like for December to blur by—what it's like to arrive on the doorstep of Christmas as another exhausted casualty of our materialistic age. Reacting. Organizing. Shopping. Planning. Wrapping. Budgeting. Stressing. Eating. Stress-eating. So I am writing to those who, like me, need to slow down and embrace the oft-missed words of the famous carol, “Let every heart prepare him room.” How do we prepare: Join us for Sunday morning worship! Take time to read



Scripture, reflect and pray. Offer the gift of your time, your listening ear, your kind heart to a lonely neighbor.

Advent is a way of reminding us that we are pilgrims passing through; that the brokenness of this world isn't how it's always going to be; that something life-changing is indeed coming—we celebrate it in the birth of the babe of Bethlehem

December will be busy. But it doesn't have to be a blur. Let's begin preparing room in our hearts this Advent for Immanuel—God with us! See you Sunday!

Wishing you and your loved ones a most joyous Christmas and blessings for the new year!
Pastor David

Please don't hesitate to stop by the office, or text, or email, or call!

Cell: 732-547-3480

Email: dfbsbv@gmail.com

I'm in the church office Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9am-2pm (unless I'm out visiting).

ADVENT SOCIAL



Thank you to Tara Perigny and Shelley Zuckerman for hosting the Advent Social at their home on Friday evening, December 8. Thanks to all the great cooks there was lots of great food, and also lots of singing, and lots of laughing. It was a wonderful way to start the holiday season.

BLUE CHRISTMAS PRAYER SERVICE

The holiday season can be a difficult time for many people. As the world around us is filled with merriment, perhaps you are grieving the loss of a loved one or the ending of a relationship, struggling with an illness or have experienced the loss of employment, or facing challenges or changes that are unsettling. You may be wondering how you will get through the holidays.

We invite you to join us on **Thursday, December 21 at 6pm** for a time of prayer and reflection, as we acknowledge our hurt and pain, and find comfort, hope and renewal through our shared faith. All are welcome.



ANNUAL REPORT TIME

It will soon be time to start work on the 2023 annual report to the congregation. All committee chairpeople, moderators of groups and treasurers need to submit a report on their work to the clerk of session no later than **Friday, January 12**. Mark your calendar now and see that your report is submitted to Carol Belles on or before January 12. If you are not sure if you are required to submit a report, check with Carol.

CONFIRMATION PROGRAM CONTINUES

Our six confirmands continue their journey of learning about developing their understanding of the Christian faith.

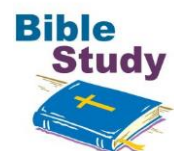
The youth participants and their mentors are:

Miles Buck	Mark Thomas
Noelle Buck	Karen Nolan
Nabila Elsharabasi	Sandy Murray
Emma Moore	Tara Perigny
Jillian Moore	Robin Garzoni
Peyton Valentino	Shirley Hafford

Please keep the youth and their mentors in your prayers during the coming year!

BIBLE STUDY

On the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month, via Zoom, we meet for Bible Study, using the Scripture passages which are from the lectionary for the following Sunday. ALL ARE WELCOME! No prior knowledge necessary! If you're interested in joining us, or giving the group a try, please let Pastor David know. Our first meeting of the new year will be Thursday, January 4, 2024.



WORSHIP COMMITTEE

For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. -Isaiah 9:6-7

Welcome to the Christmas season! During Advent, various families are assisting with the worship service by lighting the candles on the wreath. Thank you for volunteering to help.



On December 24th, we will hold our annual pageant at our 10:30 worship service. All are welcome and we hope you will consider participating. We will have an evening Christmas Eve service at 8:00 pm. Anyone who wishes to participate in the choir should come at 7:00 pm for rehearsal.

A special thank you to Carol Belles and Robin Garzoni for decorating the sanctuary. Thank you also to those who brought in their nativities for our windows. Make sure to take a few minutes to read about why they are so special to our congregants.

As we enter the new year, we hope you will be willing to participate in the worship service by ushering, being a liturgist, or participating in the choir. Please see a member of the worship committee if you have questions or are interested.

If you wish to be a part of the worship committee, our next meeting will be held on January 28th. All are welcome to attend.

COMMITTEES AND CHAIRPEOPLE

The session of the church has several committees that oversee the ministries of the congregation. All committees are open to people interested in serving in a particular area. If you would like to be part of a church committee, contact the chairperson to volunteer, or speak to the chairperson if you just want more information.

Christian Education – Mark Thomas
Membership & Outreach – Beth Clark and Shirley Hafford
Property & Finance – Ginger Baker and Bill Mansmann
Worship – Kate Moore and Karen Nolan
Stewardship Campaign – Shirley Hafford
Truth & Reconciliation – Starr Alleyne and Kate Moore
Safety Committee – Karen Nolan and Shirley Hafford

STAR WORDS



On Sunday, January 7 we will observe Epiphany through our morning worship service. During worship we will share Star Words for 2024. Star words are gifts – traits, attitudes, reminders, characteristics – for you to ponder and reflect through the coming year. They may affirm some attribute you currently have or they may be a characteristic for which you can strive. If you are unable to be with us in worship on January 7, but would like a Star Word, contact Pastor David and he will get one to you.

NATIONAL GIVING ALLIANCE

For many years members of the Slackwood congregation have supported NGA by donating new clothes, first through Presbyterian Women and more recently through the session. Starting now there will no longer be a drive for new clothing but instead the session will continue to support NGA through a yearly monetary donation. Thank you to all who have donated clothing over the years.

SHARING THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT



During Advent the Membership & Outreach Committee will have a tree in fellowship hall. On the tree will be ornaments that worshipers are invited to take, and then return and place under the tree item(s) listed on the ornaments. The donated items will then be used on MLK Day of Service to make meal bags for the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. Please take an ornament or two, or as many as you wish, and provide the item listed on the ornament.

PROPERTY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

As the weather turns toward winter and the grass stops growing, many thanks to all who faithfully maintained the church lawns! Following our workday, B.Rich Company added to our work by cleaning out all garden areas, applying weed killer and spreading mulch on all gardens and trimming bushes.

The next meeting of the committee will take place following worship on Sunday January 14, 2024. We will be discussing items that can be completed over the winter. If you have any suggestions for the committee to discuss, contact Bill Mansmann at 609-651-1321 or Ginger Baker at 609-649-7292 or feel free to attend the meeting and share your thoughts.

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES

People who utilized Offering envelopes for 2023 will have a new set created for 2024. They will be available for pick-up on Sunday December 17, 2023. 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. Envelope sets not picked up by January 14, 2024, will be delivered or mailed after that date.

2024 PER CAPITA FEE

The 2024 Per Capita fee is established by the Presbytery of the Coastlands, and will be the same for 2024 as it was in 2023 - \$40 per member.

As per the Presbyterian Church,

Per capita is an opportunity for all members to participate equally, responsibly, and interdependently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission;...

The Per Capita fee supports 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 and this reduces funds available for other needs within Slackwood Church.

HANDICAPPED EQUIPMENT

If you or someone you know may be in need of a wheelchair, crutches, a cane, portable toilet or a walker, we have them available for use. Also, we have a small scooter that we have already loaned out a couple of times. Speak to anyone on the Property Committee to gain access to what you may need.



PHONE UPDATE

Terrie and Bill Mansmann will soon be dropping our landline for phone service. We have decided to join the 21st century and the technical age by going digital. Beginning December 12, our home phone number, 609-393-3718 will no longer be operational. If you wish to speak with either of us, please call our cell numbers: Terrie at 609-510-8225 or Bill at 609-651-1321.



Please check our calendar online for upcoming meetings and events:
<http://www.slackwoodchurch.org/event-calendar.html>