



# The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church  
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Rev. David Bowman, Pastor  
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December 2024

## PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

*O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,  
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
the thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.  
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;  
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.*

The thrill of hope.... Throughout the fall and into the Advent Season, we have discussed hope in our Sunday morning worship services. We have explored the idea of a hopeful future, the hope for the arrival of the Christ-child, embodying the very essence of hope.



Embracing a hopeful yet realistic outlook, while steering clear of over-optimism, significantly enhances our well-being...a weary world rejoices. Hope is an essential gift that helps us face challenges and navigate difficult moments in life. Grounded in our trust in God, who has demonstrated God's profound love for us through the gift of Jesus Christ, hope sustains and encourages us.

As we journey through this holiday season and into the new year, I hold onto hope. I hope we will continue to grow in faith and service as a church community. I hope we will find meaningful ways to respond to the needs of our neighbors. I hope that each of us will share our gifts, skills, and resources in response to Christ's call. I hope we remain committed to gathering for worship, study, fellowship, and prayer. I hope others will join us in our work and worship. Above all, I hope to be faithful in my ministry among you.



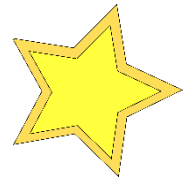
As you reflect on this Advent and Christmas season and the coming new year, what are you hoping for? What steps can you prayerfully take to ensure your life reflects your hopes and dreams?

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and A New Year full of blessings,

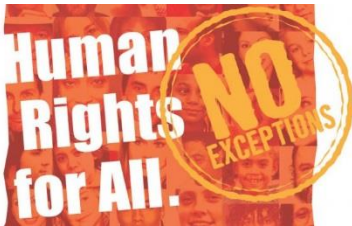
*Pastor David and Richard*

## FROM THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

- **Share a Nativity.** Once again this year worshippers are invited to bring a favorite or special **nativity** to display on one of the windowsills of the Sanctuary. There will be a card for you to write your name and something about the nativity that makes it special to you.
- A **Blue Christmas** service of worship will be held in the sanctuary on **Thursday, December 19, at 6:00 p.m.** This service provides comfort for anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one, job, home, health, or any other significant loss. We recognize that such losses can be especially challenging during the festive holiday season.
- We invite you to our **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols** on **Tuesday, December 24, at 8 PM!** It's a wonderful opportunity to gather together and celebrate the joyous birth of Christ. Come and share in this special evening with us!
- Join us for an informal worship service on **Sunday, December 29th, at 10:30 AM,** including a light breakfast. Through stories, carol singing, and prayers, we will celebrate Christmas together around the tables in Fellowship Hall.
- Join us for our **Epiphany/Star Words Sunday** as we welcome the new year on **Sunday, January 5, 2025.** We will celebrate with the sharing of Star Words and the Sacrament of Communion during our **10:30 AM worship service.** If you are unable to attend in person but would like to receive a Star Word, please contact Pastor David.



## TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION



The Truth and Reconciliation Group held a brief prayer service in front of the church after worship on December 8, 2024 in recognition of World Human Rights Day. This is a globally recognized day “commemorating the anniversary of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). The document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948 in Paris. “It enshrines the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. This year’s theme, ***Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now,*** is a call to acknowledge the importance and relevance of human rights in our everyday lives. We have an opportunity to change perceptions by speaking up against hate speech, correcting misinformation and countering disinformation. This is the time to mobilize action to reinvigorate a global movement for human rights.”\* At Slackwood, where we embrace God, extend welcome, and celebrate all, let us not forget to advocate for our brothers and sisters around the world and fight against discrimination and injustice.

Kate Moore

\*United Nations website

## STEWARDSHIP

We are wrapping up our “Future with Hope” stewardship campaign. Approximately 30 pledge cards were returned along with committee surveys. If you have not yet returned your pledge card or survey and plan to, please do so soon. The committee is working to compile the information and will share it with the Session so they can prepare the budget for 2025. It is through your generosity of your time, talents, and treasures that Slackwood can continue our mission of glorifying and serving God in our communities. Thank you for all you do.

Kate Moore

## **DEACONS**

**Thank you** to everyone who donated to the Deacons support for Project Workwell. It was a great response! We received the following email from Jeannette Rizk, Executive Director of The Workwell Partnership:

*"Thank you so much for your generous donations of hygiene products. They will be put to good use as we have several participants in each cohort who ask for them. Because of your donation, we now have a good supply."*

Wishing all our Slackwood family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## **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 will add 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 via Zoom on Tuesday December 10, 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.

## **2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES**

People who utilized Offering envelopes for 2024 or made a commitment for 2025 will have a set of envelopes created for 2025. This will allow for the creation of a record so that the quarterly reports can be generated. Envelopes will be available for pick-up on Sunday December 15, 2024. 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, 2025, will be delivered or mailed after that date.

## **2025 PER CAPITA FEE**

The 2025 Per Capita fee is established by the Presbytery of the Coastlands and will be the same for 2025 as it was in 2024 -- \$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. Speak to anyone on the Property Committee to gain access to what you may need.

## ADDRESS UPDATE

Please note that we (Terrie & Bill Mansmann) have moved into a new home at Evergreen at Hamilton. The opportunity and decision to move happened very quickly. We are now settled in at 21 Meadowlark Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08690. Our phone numbers remain the same: Terrie - 609-510-8225 or Bill - 609-651-1321.

## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the congregation to elect officers will be held on Sunday, January 26 following the morning service of worship.

## ATTENTION ANNUAL REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

The annual written report to the congregation is sent out each year in January. The deadline to get reports to the Clerk is Friday, January 10. If you chair a committee, moderate a group, serve as a treasurer, you need to submit an annual report. If you have any questions, contact Carol Belles.

## MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE

Mark your calendar now to participate in the Martin Luther King Day of Service on Monday, January 20 at 10:00 a.m. Snack and lunch bags for the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen will be prepared.



## THANK YOU

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to making my Service of Installation such a memorable event. My gratitude goes out to the ushers, choir members, reception organizers, livestream team, food contributors, those who helped with setup and cleanup, bulletin preparers and copiers, and all who attended. This afternoon will be a cherished memory for years to come. I truly appreciate each and every one of you for helping to make Slackwood Church a special community.

*Pastor David*



**SINCERE THANK YOU FROM A GRATEFUL SLACKWOOD PARISHIONER**

2024 is almost over. We have celebrated holidays from New Year to Thanksgiving with many personal celebrations in between. However since the Pesky Plague called Covid hit all of us in 2020, so many unexpected changes both good and bad have come knocking on our doors, and in my personal life I have asked for prayers from my Slackwood Family and you have all been so generous that I felt it was about time that I said a HUGE THANK YOU. Two weeks ago I was given a win in the Lottery of Life in that I have won the battle against cancer and apart from an annual checkup I am okay.

I had asked for prayers for my beautiful cousin, Heather, who had lung cancer and had to lose a part of her lung and undergo some brutal chemotherapy, and now she has been given the all clear with only 6-month checkups for the next few years.

We prayed for Heather's Great Grandson, Malcolm, who was born with bleeding on his brain and required a medevac flight to a hospital where he was operated on before he was 3 days old and today at 3 years old he is fine and healthy, though he will require checkups for some time. Malcolm is being raised by his Dad, Chili and his Grandmother Piper in Florida since his mom ignores his existence.

In 2020 when the country came to a standstill and we needed our Faith in God as never before, churches were closed! However, our Slackwood Family came through and began to broadcast the services and meetings via computer. This continues to be a wonderful benefit to those of us who cannot make it to church for whatever reason. Even on vacation we can keep up with the Sermons and the goings on at Slackwood.

We have been fortunate in having people who were able to take over our pulpit when our Pastor left -- James, Baillie and others whose names I have forgotten (senior moment) -- and then we were fortunate in having Pastor David take over and he is now our designated Pastor for which I am personally thankful. His calls and visits to those of us shut in are very much appreciated.

Also thanks must go to Maureen and Shirley for the beautiful and inspirational cards they send, also Mark and Sandra Thomas, John and Sandra Murray, Carol and Carl Belles, Terry and Bill Mansmann and Marilyn Stebbins also for cards and calls. I may have forgotten someone, so I will issue a blanket to everyone at Slackwood.

A huge thank you must go to Patrick McComas for his work in airing the service each week. He and his team of volunteers worked wonders and we now have a new team continuing this wonderful ministry -- sorry I don't know all the names.

Thanks for the beautiful music which accompanies our services each week, both in our hymns and our exceptional choir -- beautiful voices lifted to the Lord in song.

Slackwood Presbyterian Church is a small church, but with many, many willing volunteers is able to do great things in the surrounding communities and for everyone at Slackwood. I pray that our Good and Gracious God will continue to lead us as we strive to follow our Vision Statement through Vibrant Worship, Faithful Prayer, Relevant Study, Joyful Fellowship, and Compassionate Service. I borrow a phrase from Pastor David - MAY IT BE SO.

**Lilian Young**



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