

MIDWEEK MESSAGE



Arthur Rackham

Midweek E-mail from First Presbyterian Church of Jamestown, New York

December 5, 2018

David Horne, Minister of Music

Christmas is coming; the goose is getting fat . . . That marvelous mayhem that marks the season for making merry is for many of us just plain chaotic. Yuletide festivities can look more like an exercise in endurance than a celebration of the birth of the Redeemer. The outlay of small fortunes in the name of jollification can seem at cross-purposes with the sacred. Amid the season's bedlam it is good to remember the themes of Advent as we prepare for Christmas Day: Hope, faith, joy and peace are all we require; the real message we need to remind us of the true meaning of Christmas.

Buying presents, baking cookies, retrieving ornaments, replacing tree lights, caroling with the choir, making the round of Christmastide observances; all can serve to remind us to keep hope for a better tomorrow; preserve faith in a humanity, in all its

perplexing contradictions that is part of the design; maintain joy in the knowledge that we truly are all one and finally preserve, for that holiest of days, the peace that transcends our earthly limitations and sustains us in the days to come.

For myself, a tradition that I have kept for several years has been a public reading of Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol* that I hope to continue through the miracle of live-streaming technology. Although the practical, technical details have yet to be worked out, I plan to give the reading again this year to remind me of the lessons learned by the glacial Ebenezer Scrooge.

In the words of Scrooge's nephew, Fred, "There are many things from which I might have derived good by which I have not profited, I dare say," [returned the nephew,] "Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas-time, when it has come round-apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that-as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

David

REMEMBERING YOU IN OUR PRAYERS:

Lucy Miller's son Paul; Catherine Willard's sister Nancy; Lois Strickler's daughter-in-law; Lynda Howards' niece Sarah; Liz Harris; Mick Yates who's home now; Barb Schuckers; Verna Krudys; Julie Dudgeon; Benita and Alfred Welker; The family of George H.W. Bush; Marion Johnson; Tony and Sara; the Nominating Committee, Session, and church Staff hard at work; those waiting for job openings; for our college students wrapping up this semester in the next couple of weeks.

ACP Family for October: Lillian and Landon and their Grandma and Grandpa

Staff Member: Danielle Kent

If you need a ride to church or a doctor's appointment, would like a visit from the Pastor, could use support from our Casserole and Cookie Crew, or would like to let us know about a prayer concern, please let the church office know. The Member Care Committee is ready to help you out.

NEW for this Sunday, December 9th

Sunday School Breakfast at 9:00 am
Pastor's Storytime at 9:15, then classes at 9:30 am
This week the children will be learning about Esther
Adult Education will cover this week's video series
"Advent as Looking"
Worship in the Sanctuary at 10:30 am

This Sunday, December 9th

Liturgist: Carolyn Whitehead

Greeter: Gayle Schulte

Ushers: Bridgette and David Winters, Becky and Craig Colburn

Next Sunday, December 16th

Liturgist: Linda Barber

Greeter: CK Hennon

Ushers: Beth and Bruce Archibald, Greg Kellogg and Stephanie Burdo

Coming Soon!

It's Almost Here!

*Last rehearsals are beginning, all together now. . . This Thursday, December 6, from **5:30 to 6:15, the Children's Choir will rehearse**, and then the **Youth Choir will join the Chancel Choir at 7:00** for a quick run through, then be dismissed early while the others continue rehearsing.*

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Join the Youth Group on **Sunday, December 16th** for an evening of Carols, Cocoa and Cookies! We will make it an early night. If you have ideas for any of our members who can't get out much, and would love some festive carolers at their door, please contact Peggy.

Christmas Trees, Poinsettias and...

There are two **Christmas Gift Trees** waiting for your attention. The tree in Sandra J. Merwin Fellowship Hall will contain ornaments that have gift ideas for **A Children's Place** pasted on the back. Take down the ornament, then attach it to your unwrapped gift by **Sunday, December 16**.

The **Dove Tree** is located in the Cloister. This tree is sponsored by the Mission Committee and is for donations of *anything that warms*, such as mittens, hats, socks, etc. You may take a dove ornament, make or purchase the item, then bring it back unwrapped with the dove attached, and place it under the tree. These also need to be placed under the tree by **December 16**, so they can be packed up after church and delivered to the area schools before Christmas break.

We will be putting **Poinsettias** in the church again this year to decorate for Christmas and then give to our home-bound members. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in memory/honor of a loved one, the cost is \$10. Please contact the Church office stating who your poinsettia is in memory/honor of, along with your check. An Email sent to Coordinator@firstpresjamestown.com will also work. All this information is needed by **December 16**.

Offerings:

The Christmas Joy offering will be collected during the Worship Service on **December 23**. There will be envelopes in the Sanctuary at that time, and we have some in the office if you would like to pick one up earlier. Also, we still have pledge cards available. It's not too late to put those in too.



Trying Something New for Advent

Casting Call for The ABC's of Christmas

The Christmas story is dramatic; a remarkable cast of characters, lush scenery, lots of movement, heroes and villains, visions and dreams. What more could you ask for? No wonder generations of congregations, big and small, have been creating Christmas pageants and plays. That is why over the four Sundays of Advent, with the help of the children, we will be *setting the Christmas Stage*, getting ready for our Christmas drama on December 23, **The ABC's of Christmas**.

So parents, we need your **HELP**. Please listen to the Carol of the Day at home during the week before we meet Sunday morning. The children will be leading it in worship. You can find them on most streaming services. If possible, have your child wear a costume (i.e.; bathrobe for shepherd, Burger King Crown for wise guys...), of course we will have some costumes at the church. And finally, bring your young performer to Sunday School these four weeks of Advent. For the first 15 minutes of Sunday School, we will give parts and sing through the Carol of the Day, or parts of it. With your help this year's Christmas pageant will be a huge success.

Worshipping With Kids - **December 9, 2018**

CAROL OF THE DAY: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

This Sunday we will be **Gathering the Chorus**, so bring a stuffed animal to church with you. Any animal will do.

"Angels We Have Heard on High" is a musical celebration. You can hear it in the words (joyous strains, jubilee, gladsome tidings) and images (Angels singing, mountains replying, heavenly songs). You even hear in the music a joyful anticipation of Christ's birth in Bethlehem. Listen for the joy in this song at home (most music streaming services will have it). Even non-readers can be invited to sing the long, drawn out, fun to sing Gloria's in the chorus and understand the joy.

Kid's may wonder what "*Gloria in excelsis deo*" means. It is Latin and means "Glory to God in the highest."

See you Sunday as we continue to **Set the Christmas Stage**.

DATES TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR

Church Business Hours:

Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

December 5 – TON 3:15 pm

December 6 – Aging and Saging 12:00 pm

December 6 – Children's Choir 5:30 pm

December 6 – Chancel Choir 7:00 pm

December 8 – Koinonia 4:30 pm

December 9 – Fellowship/Hospitality Committee 11:45 am

December 9 – Youth Committee 11:45 am

December 13 – Aging and Saging 12:00 pm

December 13 – Chancel Choir 7:00 pm

December 16 – Communication Committee 11:45 am

December 16 – Youth Group Christmas Caroling 5:30 pm

December 19 – TON Christmas Party 3:15 pm

December 20 – Aging and Saging 12:00 pm

December 20 – Chancel Choir 7:00 pm

December 23 – Joyful Homecoming Breakfast/ Family Service 9:00 am

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service 8:45 pm Prelude 9:00 pm Service

Church Office Will Be Closed on December 25, 26, and January 1

December 30 – Worship in the Chapel 10:30 am

December 30 – Youth Group New Year's Eve, Eve game night