



Steeple Notes

First Presbyterian Church of Huron

Pastor Joel Stevenor

December 2016



Waiting

Advent and Christmas are my favorite times of the year. It is a time of wonderment and beauty. It is also a time of waiting, and I am not talking about waiting for Santa! It is a time of waiting for the terrifying prospect of God dwelling amongst us. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is my favorite theologian, he stood uncompromisingly in the face of the Nazi regime and paid the ultimate price for it. I would like to share a reflection he wrote when he was in prison.

“We have become so accustomed to the coming of God at Christmas that we no longer feel the shiver of fear that God’s coming should arouse in us. We are indifferent to the message, taking only the pleasant and agreeable out of it and forgetting the serious aspect, that the God of the world draws near to the people of our little earth and lays claim to us.”

So, in our waiting this season what are we doing to prepare for the God of the world’s appearance. Will we be too busy to notice that once again the gift of love has been given? Will our “holiday plans” take up space that was meant for the Christ? Or, are we willing to kneel once again in thanks for the God who claims us as God’s very own and in that claiming became flesh and dwelt among us. May the blessing of the Christmas claiming be yours not only in this season but all the seasons of your life!

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...

John 1:14

Blessings,
Joel



Special Events are planned for each Sunday of Advent. On **Dec 4th**, we will do Christmas Trivia Night from 5-6:30 pm with soup and sandwiches. On **Dec 11th**, we will go Christmas Caroling from 3-5:00 pm. The earlier time will let us visit the nursing home. Following we will dine on hot dogs and chips. On **Dec 18th**, we will gather for Stories and Carols at 5-6:30 pm. Cookies and warm drinks will be served.

Christmas Dinner

Help us give local families in need Christmas dinner. We will be collecting the following items:

- ◆ Box or bag of Stuffing or Potatoes
- ◆ Can of Vegetable
- ◆ Can of Fruit
- ◆ Box Mix for Muffins or Bread
- ◆ Boxed Desert Mix

The food pantry is not able to accept donations of fresh food or food with expired dates.

Please place all 5 items in one bag. If donating multiple meals, please bag each meal in its own bag. Families will be given the entire bag.

The idea is to give the families all the fixings for a Christmas dinner in one bag. The meat has already been provided. You can add any extras like gravy, cranberry, olives, jello, etc.

Bring your donation to church any time before Sunday, **Dec 11th**, and place it under the harvest table in the Parlor.



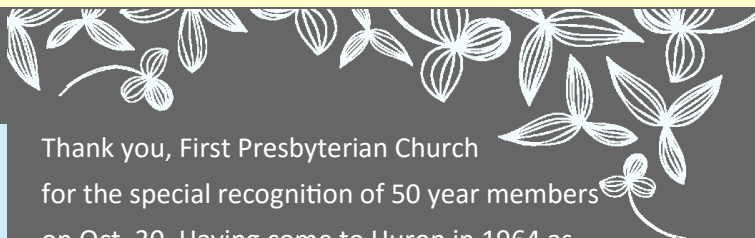
Our 3rd Annual Holiday Bake Sale will be held on **Dec 18th** after our Worship Thru Music service. Proceeds will go to our Building Fund and will help maintain our beautiful church.

Bakers: We will be setting up on Saturday and it would be helpful if you would drop off your donation on Dec 17th from 11 am - 2 pm. If you are bringing your donation on Sunday, please make certain it is packaged and ready for sale. Assorted cookies are a big favorite as are sweet breads, dessert bars, candy, and pumpkin rolls. Thank you in advance for your kind participation. **Eaters:** please stop by our table in the Fellowship Hall and purchase one (or more) of the amazing sweet treats.

Christmas Joy Offering

A Presbyterian tradition for almost 70 years, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide congregations direct ways of supporting specific causes that help those in need.

The envelopes for this special offering will be in the pews and on the harvest table in the parlor. This offering will be collected through Christmas Eve.



Thank you, First Presbyterian Church for the special recognition of 50 year members on Oct. 30. Having come to Huron in 1964 as strangers, my family and I were welcomed into this church fellowship. Over the years, through joys, sorrows, and many lasting friendships made, it has been a haven of love in Christ's church of believers.

In Grateful Appreciation, Margaret Swords



Thank You

Simply Give Fall Campaign

The Helping Hands Food Pantry (in Huron) has been selected by Meijer for their fall benevolence campaign. From now through December 31st, you can pick up a food donation card at Meijer, and they will match your donation.

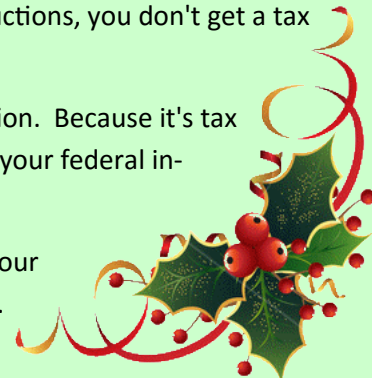
Did You Know ...

If you are an IRA owner and are over age 70½ this year, you must take your required minimum distribution (RMD) by the end of the year. Normally any IRA distribution, including your RMD, is taxable to you, but a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is tax-free as long as certain rules are followed.

Under the IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution rules, if you are actually age 70½ or older on the date of the distribution, you can give your RMD or any amount up to \$100,000 directly to charity tax-free. The IRA funds must be transferred directly to a qualified charity. The charitable donation from your IRA can satisfy your RMD for the year. You can't take a tax deduction for the charitable contribution - but, unless you itemize deductions, you don't get a tax deduction for charitable contributions.

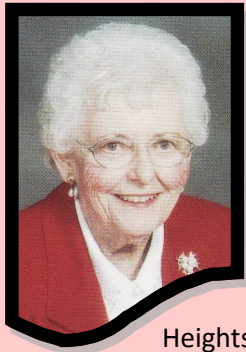
The reason why you likely will save taxes using a QCD is because it's a tax-free distribution. Because it's tax free, it won't increase your adjusted gross income (AGI) and thus won't affect items on your federal income tax return that are negatively impacted by a higher AGI.

If you are over age 70½ and have an IRA, consider using the QCD to pay your pledge to our church. It should save you money! Ask your tax professional if you have any questions.



Our Deepest Sympathy

Matthew 11:28 *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*



Margaret Tylee Nielson, 95, passed away Nov. 14, 2016, at her home in Huron.

Born in Cleveland on April 22, 1921, Margaret spent most of her life in Northeast Ohio with a stint in St. Louis. She graduated from Cleveland

Heights High School and the Spencerian School of Secretarial Science, and worked as an executive secretary for the Ambus Jones Company in the Arcade Building in Cleveland.

Margaret was particularly fond of card games, puns and happy hour with friends and family. She was a passionate advocate for education and volunteered for several years tutoring women who were learning English as a second language at the Huron Library.

Margaret was an active member of our church, serving as a deacon, on the Nurture and Mission committee, and as a longtime host of the Mary Circle.

James Edward Carnal, 75, of Huron, passed away Saturday, Nov. 19, 2016, in Admiral's Pointe Nursing & Rehabilitation, Huron, after a long and courageous battle with a number of medical issues.



He was born May 4, 1941, in Evanston, Ill. After serving in the U.S. Navy and then graduating from Southern Illinois University, Jim began a long and successful career in financial management with Ford Motor Company until retiring in 1999.

Jim enjoyed living in Huron at the shore of Lake Erie and was a member of the Huron Yacht Club. He always looked forward to a round of golf at Thunderbird Hills and he especially loved the companionship of his dogs, Nellie, Beka, and Brodie.

Jim was a man of strong faith and was a long-time member our church.

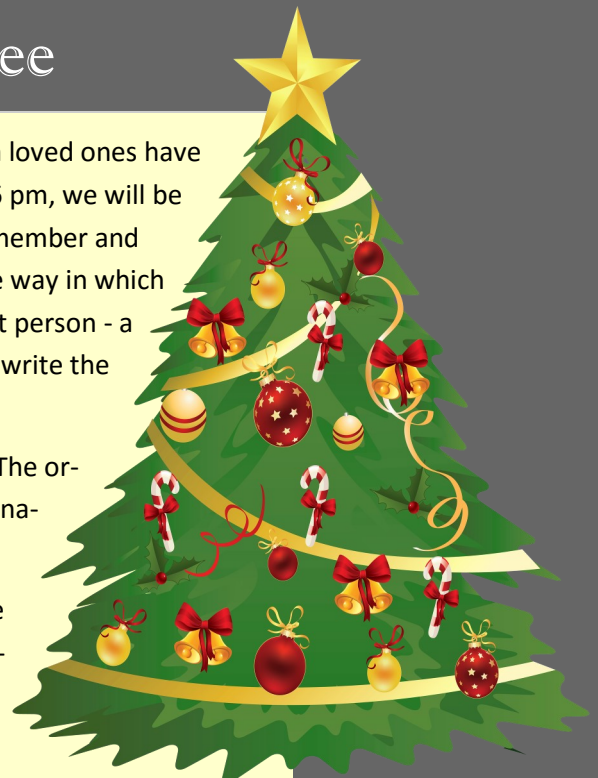
*Because someone we love is in heaven,
there is a little bit of heaven in our home.*

Christmas Remembrance Tree

The Christmas Season is a time to spend with family and friends. When loved ones have passed, Christmas becomes a time to remember them. On Dec 7th at 6 pm, we will be holding our first Christmas Remembrance Service. This service is to remember and give thanks for those in our life who have now entered eternal life. The way in which we will honor these people is to bring an ornament that represents that person - a favorite hobby, their profession, or a shared interest. Inconspicuously, write the person's name on the ornament.

We will place our ornaments on the communion table for the service. The ornaments will be blessed. At the end of the service, you will hang the ornament on the Remembrance Tree in the Parlor.

The ornaments will remain at our church and will be placed back on the tree each Christmas. If you are unable to attend, you may bring the ornament to the office. Pastor Joel will make sure that the ornaments are placed on the tree.



Thanksgiving

We would like to thank everyone who helped to make our Thanksgiving Dinner a success.



On Dec 9th at 7 pm, join pianist Ryan Christopher Neal for an evening of Advent and Christmas music including favorites like *In the Bleak Midwinter*; *Away in a Manger*; *Joy to the World*; *Fantasy on O Come Little Children*; *Coventry Carol*; *Still, Still, Still*; *I Saw Three Ships*; and more! Ryan holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Organ Performance from Ohio Northern University and currently serves as the Director of Music at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Parish in Medina, Ohio (a parish of over 3,400 families). He is also a freelance collaborative musician in the greater Cleveland area.



Five years before the 2010 earthquake sent Haiti into crisis, Presbyterian mission worker Mark Hare was already in the country, helping Haitian farmers grow significant amounts of food on small plots of land. Mark serves as an agricultural technician in and around Papaye, a town about 80 miles from the earthquake's epicenter.

While the quake's destructive force didn't reach Papaye, the community nevertheless was affected by the disaster. The people of Papaye, like Haitians in other rural areas, made their homes places of refuge for friends and relatives left homeless by the earthquake. In all, around 800,000 displaced Haitians ended up in small communities like Papaye.

One of the survivors, Enel, came to Papaye nursing a foot that was crushed during the earthquake. His parents, Walther and Yolandi, welcomed their 25-year-old son home, cared for his injury and provided him a safe place to stay. While hunger is rampant in Haiti, this family enjoys good nutrition with plenty of fresh vegetables that they grow near their house.

They and their neighbors have adequate food in large part because of the work of Mark and the Farmers Movement of Papaye, commonly known by its Creole acronym, MPP. Mark leads a Haitian crew that trains small farmers in the agricultural techniques that MPP is developing, and they provide extension services for farmers in the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.

As Mark relates to the people of Haiti, he looks to Jesus as his role model for building a common life with others. "In terms of my sense of call, it comes at least in part from the example of Christ's life, particularly his consistent participation in the lives of the people of Galilee," Mark says. "His work seems always in the middle of the crowd; he didn't separate himself. He wasn't above, he wasn't below, he was together with."



If there is anything good that can come out of a hurricane, it is preparation for the next one. That appears to be the feeling of residents and volunteers working in New Hope and Coastal Carolina presbyteries in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew. While the eastern parts of the state took the brunt of flooding from the storm, many feel the cooperation between agencies and communities has made the cleanup effort a bit easier.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance responded quickly to the needs of the presbyteries following Matthew's wrath in early October. Bill Reinhold, general presbyter and stated clerk for Coastal Carolina, says PDA has been very supportive during the lengthy cleanup.

The next phase for the presbytery will be long-term emotional care and resources for the communities. Reinhold says he's keeping close watch to see if fatigue is beginning to set in.

"Work teams are still eager to come in and I'm watching my colleagues as they gather in these groups. Their energy level is still pretty high, but I know that it can't be sustained week in and week out with all of the other responsibilities that pastors carry," he said. "Everyone wants to help but we need to watch out for ourselves and each other."

History of Ornaments

When Germans immigrated to the United States, they brought the Christmas tree with them. The Christmas tree tradition did not become popular until Queen Victoria was seen posing next to a Christmas tree in the royal palace. Since Queen Victoria had a Christmas tree, everyone in the "society circle" had to have a Christmas tree.

It is an old German tradition that these are the first twelve ornaments hung on the tree each year.

- ◆ Heart signifies love in the home.
- ◆ Pine cone symbolizes eternity.
- ◆ House denotes family shelter.
- ◆ Animals represent peace with nature.
- ◆ Church or angel symbolizes God.
- ◆ Fish symbolizes Christ and fertility.
- ◆ Flower basket typifies beauty in the home.
- ◆ Rose is the symbol of the Virgin Mary.
- ◆ Bird in a nest is confidence in the shelter.
- ◆ Teapot represents hospitality.
- ◆ Basket of fruit means plenty.
- ◆ Santa symbolizes sharing and giving.

Another tradition is that a newlywed couple's Christmas tree be adorned with only these twelve ornaments their first year.

Church of the Nativity



The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (pictured right) is one of the oldest continuously operating churches in the world. The structure is built over the cave that tradition marks as the birthplace of Christ. The silver star, beneath the altar in the Grotto of the Nativity, marks the spot believed to be the birthplace of Jesus (pictured left).

The first basilica on this site was begun by Saint Helena, the mother of the Emperor

Constantine I. The original structure burnt down in 529. The current basilica was rebuilt in its present form in 565 by Emperor Justinian I. To enter the basilica, one must pass through a very low door called the "Door of Humility."





- Dec 2 Church Women United Christmas Luncheon
- Dec 4 Christmas Trivia Night at 5 pm
- Dec 6 PW Circle Christmas Dinner at 6 pm
- Dec 7 Christmas Remembrance Service at 6 pm
- Dec 8 Salvation Army Angel Collection at noon
- Dec 9 Retired Teachers Luncheon
- Dec 9 Ryan Neal Concert at 7 pm
- Dec 11 Little Wonders' Concert at 1 pm
- Dec 11 Christmas Caroling at 3-5 pm
- Dec 14 Christ's Meal at 5 pm
- Dec 14 F&M Meeting at 7 pm
- Dec 15 N&M Meeting at 7:30 pm
- Dec 18 Worship Thru Music and Bake Sale
- Dec 21 Session Meeting at 7 pm
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Service at 11 pm
- Dec 26 Steeple Notes deadline
- Dec 24-Jan 1 The church office will be closed from Christmas Eve through New Year's Day.



Joel's Office Hours

Monday-Thursday
9 am - 4 pm

Becky's Office Hours

Monday-Wednesday
8-11:30 and 12:30-3:30 pm
Thursday-Friday
8-11:30 am

Jan and Feb Sign Up Sheets for Ushers is in the Narthex.

Jan and Feb Sign Up Sheets for Hospitality Servers is in the Fellowship Hall.

Flower Sign Up Sheet for 2017 is in the Parlor.

Those interested in being a Liturgist should contact Karen Brown 419-627-8194.



- 2 Chris Hakeman
- 5 Fern DeLamatre
- 7 Karen Brown
- 9 Dick Connerth
- 12 Stacy Holloway
- 16 Jeanne Smith
- 22 Marty Ryu
- 24 Edwina Chamberlin
- 25 Jesus Christ
- 25 Katy Mischler
- 25 Carol Johnson
- 29 Sharon Velliquette



We are trying to wrap up our 2017 pledge drive. Our thanks to everyone that has pledged for 2017. It definitely makes it easier for us to plan our 2017 budget. If you haven't turned in a 2017 pledge card, it's not too late. Please contact Becky in the office to get a pledge card.

	Ushers	Liturgist	Hospitality	Flowers
Dec 4	Kathy McGraw and Ed Osteen	Janis Brewer	Ron Ruble	Ron Ruble
	Communion Servers: Marcie and Bob Muntz, John Bickell, and Tammy Boos			Set-up: Karen Brown
Dec 11	Ron Ruble and Clark Culbertson	Tammy Boos	Kathy Kirby	Janet and Fritz Mueller
Dec 18	Clark Culbertson and Jeanne Schafer	No Liturgist	Special Surprise	Ellen and Tim Drumm
Dec 25	No Ushers on Xmas Eve or Christmas Day	No Liturgist	No Hospitality Hour	Jann Glann