Christ is all and in all." Colossians 3:11

Pres-Bits Newsletter

The Presbyterian Church of Washington

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"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." - John 1:5

Dear Friends.

The above verse of scripture stands among my most beloved passages from God's word. I leaned on its words on September 11, 2001. I constructed a sermon around that message after the horrific violence at Sandy Hook Elementary on December 14, 2012. I kept repeating it to myself in the two year span when Karen ad I lost both of our mothers to cancer. I have also shared this passage with others who feel consumed by grief, worry or anxiety.

The verse comes from the "prologue" to the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John does not include a nativity story. There are no angels appearing to shepherds, no magi travelling from the east, no infant resting in a manger in the first chapter of John. Instead, John takes a much more theological approach to the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. John doesn't record the specifics of *how* the advent of Jesus Christ happened. Instead, John records the *why*.

Jesus Christ is the light that shines in the darkness. That is our Hope. And, the darkness WILL NOT overcome it. That is a promise.

If you are like Karen, Alex and I, you may have reason to be worried, anxious, bereaved, sorrowful or greatly disappointed this holiday season. You may be dealing with an illness or difficult diagnosis. You may feel fearful of the future. You may look at the world, this nation, its leadership, and feel dismay. It is helpful to us, and I pray you may also find it helpful, to be reminded of the HOPE of the Christmas season.

Jesus didn't come into the world just so we have an excuse to exchange gifts, sing songs and eat a big meal. Those things are lovely and precious. But, God came to us in the incarnation of Jesus Christ for so much more. Jesus Christ represents our hope! This is our hope that whatever darkness may come - loss, tragedy, brokenness, illness, even death itself – the light of Jesus Christ will not be overcome by that darkness. Our hope for life beyond life will always prevail.

Karen, Alex and I also want to thank the congregation for being our "light in the darkness" as well. Your cards, prayers, well-wishes, gifts, comments and meals have been highly uplifting to us. YOU have given us hope for the future. YOU have made us feel loved. And, for that we thank you for shining a light in our darkness.

It is our prayer that Jesus Christ may illumine your darkness and restore your hope this Christmas season.

Merry Christmas to all of our precious friends!

Pastor Pat

Our Church Mission Statement

Jesus Christ calls us to:

- Enliven our spiritual lives by experiencing God among us,
- Grow in love for one another as children of God,
- Invite all to share in our fellowship,
- Demonstrate God's love through service to others.

December Office Hours

The church office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The church will be closed on Friday, December 23rd and Monday, December 26th for the Christmas Holiday.

Current Elders

David Brunworth	636-239-4102	dbrunworth@hotmail.com
Vivian Marshall	636-667-0013	marshv1849@att.net
Barbara Schofield	636-390-4123	barbara.schofield2003@gmail.com
Sid Thayer	636-239-7617	sidneythayer@yahoo.com
Bruce Wiese	636-432-1057	ssswbw@charter.net
Jamie Tucker	314-814-2780	jmtsrvir09@gmail.com
Mary Ellenberger	636-742-4591	maryvet01@yahoo.com
Kathy Froning	636-239-7995	kathyfroning@yahoo.com
Lois Kempf	314-630-8379	loiskempf@hotmail.com
Karen Ladd	636-239-5271	jladd001@charter.net
Tim Urban	636-239-2082	tim.urban22@yahoo.com
Mary Eleanor Farrell	636-239-7300	mef@yhti.net

The Lord's Supper

The sacrament of Communion will be served on Sunday, December 4th in morning worship and at the Christmas Eve worship service at 11 p.m. on December 24th.

Communion Assignments for December:

Preparer: Karen Ladd

Servers: Kathy Froning, Tim Urban, Jamie Tucker, Lois Kempf

Worship Assignments for December:

Sound Tech:

12/4/2016	Allen Vogt
12/11/2016	Ian McCracken
12/18/2016	Joe Hagan
12/25/2016	Tom Ellenberger

Worship Leader: Luther Bierbaum

Ushers

Jean Weekly & Kay Hucke Roland Schwarzen & June Gellhausen Luther Bierbaum & Barb Hagan

Greeters

Struckhoff's & Nancy Klingert Tim & Gerry Urban Don & Jenny Scheibe Allen Vogt & Karla Becker

Choir

Choir practice starts at 9:00 each Sunday. We would love to see some new faces in the choir! Any questions please contact John Bugele at 636-346-2133.

Change for Chickens

Are your pockets dragging you down with too much change? Are you paying for things with pennies and nickels to get rid of change? How about making a donation to Change for Chickens? A worthwhile cause to help others and get rid of that pesky change.

Warblers

Warblers will meet on Wednesday, December 28. We would love to have more voices come. The only requirement is to make a "joyful noise." Call Anna Mae Boehmer for more information at 239-3344 or call 314-691-0473.

Movie Night

Our next Movie Night event will be on Friday December 30th at 7 p.m. and the film will be a mystery movie. We will give you clues soon! Bring your stadium chairs and join us in our Fellowship Hall for a cozy evening watching a wonderful move with some friends. Surround sound, giant screen, free popcorn, water bottles and soda, all provided. Please feel free to bring more friends.

December Birthdays

12-2 William Stahlhuth	12-14	Karen Gruber	12-25	David Brunworth
12-6 Michele Zumsteg	12-15	Dorothy Weekly	12-30	Tom Kempf
12-10 Janet Aaron	12-22	Alicia Thater	12-31	Steven Henderson
James Jackson	12-24	Barbara Schofield		

Food Pantry Items of the Month

The shelves at Loving Hearts Outreach are still running low. In an effort to revitalize our sense of mission to this organization, we will be collecting specific items for the food pantry each month. December's items are Canned Meats,

Cereal, and Dry Pasta. All through the month of December, you are encouraged to bring these items and place them in the donation box for Loving Hearts. They can also use canned vegetables and cake mixes – basically anything non-perishable. Empty egg cartons can also be used. Thank you for your generosity!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Warner's Warm-Up Coat Drive Thank You!

Many thanks to everyone that helped out on our Warner's Warm-Up Coat Sorting Day on Saturday, November 19th as we collectively collected in our collaborative community (say that many times!) <u>1261 coats!</u> All will be distributed in our county, divided amongst eight needy agencies. Another big thanks to the donors of SEVERAL coats, used and new, just within our church family as we collected two giant boxes of coats which is so amazing! Let's do it again next year! – The Mission Committee

Harvest Table Thank You!

Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who helped out on our recent Harvest Table event on Saturday, November 19th as we served a fantastic warm meal on a cold winter night to 68 community neighbors and we really enjoyed doing it. We had a great group of people from our church and we brought such a large bounty of food to share for the meal, salad fixings, bananas and cookies made by our Youth Group. Well done, everyone! We look forward to our 2017 Harvest Table events on February 18th, April 1st, August 26th, and December 30th. – The Mission Committee.

Thank You for the Toiletries for Veterans

Thanks so much to everyone who donated toiletries to the veteran's home for our DARE program. We collected over 170 items. Our class collected almost 1200 items all together! This will help out the veterans greatly! Thank you again!! – Lucas and Logan Struckhoff

Welcome Bonnie Borgmann: our new Administrative Assistant/Financial Secretary!

The Personnel Committee and Pastor Pat are thrilled to welcome Bonnie Borgmann to our staff as our brand-spanking-new Administrative Assistant/Financial Secretary. Seven resumes were received and reviewed by the committee, four interviews were conducted and our top choice

accepted the position! Bonnie worked for the School District of Washington for thirty years. The last title she carried for the school district was "Finance Director." She is extremely experienced and highly qualified and has a delightful personality. Bonnie will begin work on Monday, November 28th. Office hours will remain 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Drop by, show her some "Radical Hospitality" and welcome her to PCW. (edit: Jocelyn, who has been preparing the bulletin and newsletter says, "Thank you, Bonnie, for coming so speedily!")

Congregational Meeting

There will be a meeting of the Congregation of PCW after worship on Sunday, December 4th. The 2016 Nominating Committee will be presenting their report. The Congregation will elect the new class of ruling elders for Session and the 2017 Nominating Committee.

Per Capita and Financial Review

The Finance Committee says there is still time to submit the per capita assessment in the amount of \$30.34 to the church office for those who still want to participate. This is the assessment that the presbytery bills the churches in 2016 based on church membership. Thank you.

A review of the church financial, the PDO financials, and the Cemetery financials was completed for 2015 and 2016. The Presby Scrip financials were reviewed for 2016. The review was done by Gretchen Farrell and Becky Vogt.

ADVENT ACTIVITIES AT THE CHURCH

The Giving Tree

The Giving Tree is up! We are once again working with The Pregnant Assistance Center to help provide Christmas gifts to needy families in our area. We will also be accepting donations of gasoline gift cards (or \$ to buy) to be distributed through the Loving Hearts outreach program in Washington. The Giving Tree is located just outside of the sanctuary. To participate, choose an ornament, sign your name and gift number on the sign-up sheet, purchase that gift and return the gift (unwrapped with the

ornament attached) to the box next to the tree by Sunday, December 4th. If you have any questions please contact Pamela Kellerman (636-239-7958). Thank you for caring and sharing. People working together make good things happen.

Great Christmas Gifts from the Scrip Table

With the Christmas holiday fast upon us, remember to use the Presby Scrip Program when purchasing those gift cards for your family and friends. With each gift card you purchase the church receives an immediate rebate from merchants. It's easy to do, just order the gift cards one Sunday and they will be ready for you to pick up the next Sunday. Just stop by the Scrip Table outside the Sanctuary following worship.

We have the perfect one size fits all gift...Scrip cards! They work for anyone, any age, and there are hundreds of retailers to choose from! Stop by our table after worship and see how easy and quick this is AND how much it benefits our church! It's such a wonderful way to buy just about ANYTHING; it's crazy NOT to do it.

For the next several weeks the Scrip Table has available some low-denomination cards that would be excellent stocking-stuffers, little gifts, or just "special extras" for friends, teachers, club gift exchanges, etc. Check out our table with the \$10 Applebee's, \$5 Barnes and Noble, \$5 Starbucks, and \$10 Target cards in stock as well as the usual selections of Bob Evans, Miller Grill, Steak N Shake. Let your purchase of stocking stuffers benefit the church-family programs and local-area ministry. Remember also as you plan your gifting for the season that you can order cards from the major department stores, toy stores, Amazon, Walmart, Bath & Body Works, Cabela's, Bass Pro Shop, pet stores, restaurants. See the whole long list at the SCRIP TABLE.

The Presby Scrip Table will be closed on Sunday, December 25. So, get those gift cards early. Thank you to all the members and friends who have helped to make this program such a success this past year!

"Blue Christmas" Refuge

Pastor Pat and Robbin Thayer are hosting a very special small group gathering on Thursday, December 8th at 7p.m. The focus of this small group will be navigating pain, sadness and the Holidays. If you have experienced some form of loss in the year of 2016, the first holiday season post-loss can be very challenging. We invite all those grieving this holiday season to this special support group. We will meet in room 12 off of the Fellowship Hall (The Refuge Room).

Salvation Army Bell-Ringing

Bell-Ringing is coming up Saturday, December 10th. There are slots open for folks from our congregation to sign up for this worthwhile cause. It is such a great opportunity to serve our community and meet new and old friends. The location is in front of Walmart. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board at church. It is great fun.

All-Church Potluck

Our December Pot Luck will be held Wednesday, December 14th at 5:30pm with guest speaker Lee Vandiver from SafeKids - a new local organization that addresses youth homelessness in the community.

Christmas Variety Show and Silent Auction

Invite your family and friends to our third annual Christmas Variety Show and Silent Auction, on Friday, December 16th in the sanctuary. We will have skits, soloists, special music and other talents on display. We will also join together for Christmas Carols.

Gathering time begins at 6:30 p.m. with refreshments and a time to bid on auction items. The Mission Committee is looking for ANY new or gently used items for the Silent Auction. We can be creative and make baskets with just about any donated item you have. Please come by the event and bid on our items, too. They will make great Christmas gifts! Please drop anything off at the church office by Monday, December 12th and mark "Silent Auction." Thank you! – Gretchen Farrell

See sheet on the bulletin board or speak with Judy Bierbaum of The Church Life Committee to sign up to bring refreshments.

The show itself will begin at 7p.m. Fun for the whole family!

<u>Come One, Come All, and Bring Your Christmas Voices For The Shut-Ins Sing!</u>

When: December 18th at 1:00p.m. Where: Car pool begins in church parking lot. We will be going to nursing homes and shut-ins houses to bring joyous songs of the season! Please join us to bring Christmas cheer. Any questions, call or text Lya at 314-435-4251.

Christmas Eve Worship

This Christmas, PCW will continue its tradition of holding the Christmas Eve service at 11p.m. This will be a very special candlelit service with special music and the celebration of The Lord's Supper. Please invite the rest of your family to join our Covenant family for a very special and meaningful Christmas tradition.

Pastor Pat on Vacation

Pastor Pat will be taking a vacation following the Christmas Eve service. He will be back in the pulpit on Sunday, January 1st and in the office on Tuesday, January 3rd. For pastoral emergencies, please contact our Parish Associate, Rev. Jocelyn VanBuskirk, who will also be filling the pulpit while Pastor Pat enjoys his time off with Karen and Alex.

...AND LOOKING TOWARD 2017

Washington Bridal Extravaganza

For the last two years we have had a booth at the Bridal Show for the purpose of advertising our church facilities as a venue for weddings and receptions. We are looking for people to help set up and decorate the booth as well as being in the booth during the event on Sunday, February 19th at the KC Hall building. The bridal show begins at 10:30 a.m. and closes at3:30 p.m. Of course, there is set up and take down time as well. We have brochures, gifts to hand out and pretty much everything we need for decorating the booth. Pictures are osted on the bulletin board from last year's booth. It is a fun event. Please see Judy Bierbaum to volunteer or by phone at home: 432-1293, or cell: 636-221-8404.

Prayer List

MEMBERS WITH CONTINUING NEEDS

Heather Miller, Barbara Pierce, Whip Schultz, Don & Connie Conrad, Janet Aaron, Scott McCracken, Laura Fenner, Patricia Bagley, Pam Schwarzen, Karen Gruber, Laura Evans, Mike Becker

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS IN CARE FACILITIES

GRANDVIEW: Christine Lewis

SOUTH POINTE: Elsie & Jack Truesdell, Elaine Dodson (at The Arbors), George Peters

CEDAR CREST: June Kleberger, Dorothy Mutert, Beth Saunders, Lisa Conrad

BARATHAVEN SPECIAL CARE: (Dardenne Prairie) Boots Bonney GRACEWOOD AT HIGHLAND PARK (St. Paul, MN) Mary Lais

FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH REQUESTING PRAYERS:

Vicky Vogel (sister of Karla Becker)

Anna Roetheli (friend of the church)

Laura Leigh Rhoades (daughter of Laura Evans)

Dixie Kottwitz (friend of the Bierbaums)

Jeff Pierce (son of Barbara Pierce, brother of Janet Aaron)

Rick Kresse (father-in-law of Mauri Truesdell's daughter)

Sarah McGurthy & family (daughter of Ollie & Virginia Whyte)

Taylor Bierbaum (grandson of Judy & Luther)

Holly Stoltz-Smith (friend of the church)

Betty Buerk (relative of Schultz, Vogt, Struckhoff)

Jean Kimme (friend of Barbara Schofield)

Rena Middendorf & Family (niece of Kathy Froning)

Pam Evangelist (sister of Sharon Fenner)

Ray Tucker (father-in-law of Jamie Tucker)

Joe Bryant (friend of Lya Struckhoff)

McKenna Kleinheider (granddaughter of June Gellhausen)

Felix Frye (brother-in-law of Trisha Bagley)

Charles Bagley (brother of Trisha Bagley)

Jill Ince (friend of the church)

Lisa Brule (sister of Vivian Marshall)

Beth Bonney (daughter-in-law of Boots Bonney)

Allie Mooney & Patrick Jensen (sister of Jenny Bieg)

Eunice Linda (sister of Jim Watson)

Brad Crider (Loving Hearts Outreach)

Maxine Lohr (mother of John Bugele)

Alicia Kushner (niece of Robbin Thayer)

Lori Cove (friend of the Duemlers)

Marc Houseman (friend of the church)

Fred Swantko (Derek VanBuskirk's father-in-law)