

# THE PATHFINDER

*"Making disciples who make a difference."*

December 2017

## THE VIEW FROM THE MANSE

I want to start my VFM article this month by trying to convince you to buy a hymnal. As you know, we are selling some of our left-over hymnals for \$5/each. I never knew the value of owning a hymnal until my mother was very sick in the hospital. We wanted to read passages of Scripture to her, but what ones should we read? You would think having a son who is a pastor would have been helpful. Turns out that when you are in a hospital ICU with your own mother, you can't think very well. The responsive readings in the back of the hymnal were a great guide. They are like a "the best of Scripture" list. My brothers and I read several of these responsive readings to our mom.

Another advantage of owning a hymnal is that the hymns contain such great theology. Reading or singing through them deepens our understanding of the truth. The hymnal also includes prayers and other various worship resources that help us connect with the Lord. If you would like a hymnal or two, they are available in the office hallway for \$5. (BTW - we have donated 150 of the hymnals to the 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church of Williamson, NY, a church in our Presbytery.)

From time to time we take a special Advent Offering to support a unique project or need. This year Session has decided to collect money for the Open Door/Code Blue Capital Fund Campaign. Kim Cook, Executive Director of the Open Door, was with us in worship on November 26 to update us on this exciting project to establish a permanent home for the Code Blue Shelter, provide year-round shelter for the homeless, expand the size and programs offered by the Soup Kitchen, as well as a number of other possibilities. Check out "Pathway Home Campaign" at [opendoor-ny.org](http://opendoor-ny.org) to find out more about this project.

Contributions to the Advent Offering can be placed in the Sunday morning offering plate or sent to the office. Please mark these contributions for the "Open Door."

**Steve McLean, Pastor**

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P.S. Make sure you check out the various Advent events listed on page 3&4. We want to prepare well for the celebration of Jesus' birth, as well as to make sure we are getting ready for Jesus' return.

## FRIENDLY REFLECTIONS FROM A TRANSPLANT

At the beginning of our most recent sermon series (*Applications of our Life in Christ*), we looked at Matthew 7 and discussed Jesus encouragements to pray. He told us that if we asked, we would receive. He told us that our Father in heaven knows how to give good gifts to his children. We closed the sermon with a few “how-to’s” from earlier in the sermon on the mount.

I wanted to take a moment and discuss resources for prayer. Some of us find written prayers to be stiff or fake. “Why would I pray someone else’s words? Can’t you think of your own prayers?” These are good questions that I have wrestled with myself. The conclusions I have come to are these: First, the Church has always prayed prayers that were given them alongside original prayers. There are prayers that the people of God prayed together even as far back as the Exodus (Ex.15:1-18). And this chapter ends with Miriam, the sister of Moses, singing her own prayer. Second, the psalms are prayers given to God’s people to use together. While I often read the psalms in my devotions, I acknowledge that their primary intent was corporate use. Third, Jesus tells us to use his words when we pray (Matt. 6:9). And lastly, sometimes we don’t have the words. There are many times in our lives when we don’t know what to ask for or our prayers are limited by our own experiences and we aren’t remembering the needs of the broader world. Praying written prayers from other times, cultures, people, and denominations can highlight areas of the Christian faith that we are prone to overlook.

I wanted to take a moment and mention a few resources:

- *Psalms*: The original and best resource to enrich your prayer life. Try praying through the Psalms in a month, going through 5 a day. For example, on the 3rd day of the month, begin your morning with Psalm 3. Then mid-morning, take a 5-minute break and pray Psalm 33. As you sit down for lunch, pray Psalm 63. As the temperature begins to drop and your workday slows, break and pray Psalm 93. And as you lay your head on your pillow at night, turn to Psalm 123 and pray it. In this way, you will have begun the day with God and ended it with God.
- *The Book of Common Prayer*: primarily used by the Episcopal church, this book has found a home on the bookshelves of many Christians.
- *The Valley of Vision*: This is a collection of Puritan prayers. The language is sometimes difficult to work through, but very rich.
- *Canyon Road: A Book of Prayer* by Kari Reeves: This is fairly new to me. It was written very recently and all the prayers are understandable and rich. Some very short (ex. “Lord, Help”) and some longer.

For more discussion on prayer, here is a good place to start:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/topics/prayer#>

Are there any resources you love? I would be thrilled to hear about them. I am glad to grow alongside you in this area of our walk with Christ.

**Bryan Fitzgerald, Associate Pastor**  
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## ADVENT 2017

Advent is the season of the church year that leads up to Christmas. Although it comes at the end of our calendar year, it is the beginning of the church year. "Advent" is from the Latin word for "coming" and highlights the twin emphases of this four-week season (this year, 12/3-12/24). On the one hand we remember Jesus' coming 2000 years ago and on the other we look forward to his coming again someday. As a congregation we sponsor a variety of worship, educational, fellowship and service opportunities that help us celebrate Jesus' two comings. Check out the activities below to see where you can best serve during this Advent season.

✳ **Decorating for Advent** (Saturday, December 2 at 9:00 a.m.) Join us as we set up the Christmas tree and decorate the church for Advent.

✳ **Christmas Eve Choirs** (Mondays in December) There are three Christmas Eve Choirs:

- **Cherub Choir** (4 years old through 1<sup>st</sup> grade) practices at 6:30 p.m. and is under the direction of Sandi Bonhote.
- **Junior Choir** (2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades) practices at 6:30 p.m. and is under the direction of Jessie Cormie.
- **Adult Choir** (7<sup>th</sup> grade and up) practices at 8 p.m. and is under the direction of Joyce Durkee.

Learning and singing some of the great Christmas music is a good way to appreciate more deeply the coming of Jesus.

✳ **Advent Drama** (Sunday, December 10) This year our Drama Team will be presenting *Window to the Truth*, a story about a department store employee whose life is transformed as she works on the store's Christmas window display.

✳ **Christmas Cookies for our Friends at Home** (Sunday, December 10) Each year at this time the Deacons collect Christmas cookies to deliver to our Friends at Home to let them know our congregation is thinking about them. If you would like to support this ministry, just bring a couple of dozen cookies and drop them off in the kitchen as you arrive for worship.

✳ **Ringing the Salvation Army Bell** (Wednesday, December 13) This annual tradition has become a favorite way to give back during this Advent season. We will take shifts ringing the Salvation Army Bell at the Quaker Road Wal-Mart. This is a great way to support the under-resourced in our community. Call the office or sign up in worship.

✳ **Christmas Brunch** (Sunday, December 17 at 11:30 a.m.) Plan on staying after worship for a yummy selection of brunch food and good conversation with friends from church - old and new.

✳ **Christmas Eve Set Up** (Sunday, December 24 at 11:30 a.m.) Join us after regular worship as we set up extra chairs, put out candles, check parking lot lights, move fire extinguishers and do all the other tasks to get ready for the Christmas Eve Service.

\* **Christmas Eve Service** (Sunday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m.) Invite your friends to join us on Christmas Eve for this moving candle lighting service. Through the special music of the choirs, the singing of traditional Christmas carols, the reading of Scripture passages and a brief message, we will focus on the wonder and significance of Christ's birth. Car pool if you can to allow more parking for our visitors.

\* **Christmas Day Service** (Monday, December 25 at 10 a.m.) This informal service of Scripture readings and carols lets us pause in the midst of a very busy day and season to focus on Jesus, "the reason for the season." Dress is casual.

\* **Christmas Poinsettias** to decorate the sanctuary can be ordered by calling the church office (638-8072) or signing up on the Fellowship in Worship forms. The cost is \$8.50 and they can be picked up after services on December 18, 24 or 25.

## **THE SECRET SANTA PROJECT**

Many years ago, inspired by the great work that Operation Santa does in brightening up Christmas morning for kids in our community, someone in our church came up with the idea of anonymously giving gifts to adults in our community who may not have family to remember them on Christmas. Each year a small group of us spend a morning shopping for 15-20 adults. The gifts are wrapped and then delivered with help from the Post Office. We call this ministry the Secret Santa Project. We need your help with this in two ways:

1. Do you know a neighbor or someone else who might be forgotten at Christmas who should be on our list? Email or call those names in to me.
2. Would you like to support this ministry with a financial gift. It costs us around \$600 each year to do this. Checks can be made out to the church (marked Secret Santa) and put in the offering or sent to the office.

For the elves - Steve

## **TRUSTEE TALK**

### **Slowing Down**

Our recent discussion about the excavation by the Tower revealed the need for a bigger excavator, which will enable completion of this work. It will probably be spring when we do this two-day project.

Roy is continuing his trim painting in the vestibule and up the stairs. The six doors are done. Marty did a beautiful job of repairing the deteriorated plaster on the arch in the vestibule.

We have tasked ourselves with solving the problem of making it easier to open the cellar door at the church. The replacement door that we installed a couple of years ago, looks great, but is extremely heavy and difficult to open. If anyone has an idea or

suggestion for accomplishing this task, please share it with one of the Trustees. We would definitely appreciate your help.

Lastly, THANK YOU to everyone who helped at the Fall Work Day! The ladies from the Wednesday night Bible Study provided us with a delicious and bountiful coffee break. The Young Life kids did a great job of raking and removing the tons of leaves. That allowed the rest of us to accomplish many other jobs. Again, THANK YOU!

## NEWS OF NOTE

- Again this month we will gather for “Psalm 46 Prayer.” Psalm 46 says although the world may seem like it is falling apart we will not fear because God is our refuge and strength. So, we pray together about the needs of our church, communities and world! Come join us on Sunday, December 3 from 7-8 p.m.
- Due to the busy holiday schedule, the Pathfinder deadline this month will be December 15. Please get your articles for the January issue in by then.
- In case of bad weather on Sunday mornings, check for cancellations or schedule changes on the local television stations, the church’s webpage or the church’s answering machine, or call a Session member before leaving home. For other activities (ie. choir, Bible study, etc.) call the person in charge.
- If you do not currently receive offering envelopes and would like a set, email or call the office.
- Join the many parents in our church who have the CPYU Parent Page emailed to them each month. This 4-page newsletter is designed to help “parents understand teenagers and their world.” To request a copy, email Tawni at [office@argylepresbyterian.org](mailto:office@argylepresbyterian.org).
- Looking for the perfect Christmas gift?
  - A variety of Bibles are available from the church office.
  - In the wall rack in the Lobby are catalogs of gifts made by folks from the Third World trying to support their families; Christian books to help your family and friends grow in their faith; sheep, fruit trees, school books or other things that you can purchase for a needy family in the name of someone on your Christmas list who doesn’t really need anything.

## CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

We are so looking forward to Christmas Brunch and we hope you are too! This time with our church family has become not only a tradition, but a time of great joy and just plain fun! We know how difficult it is to carve out time to visit with family and friends during this busy season so please put aside this hour or two to enjoy the fellowship (and the food!).

On December 17<sup>th</sup> following worship service, we will gather for that sumptuous **carry-in** brunch. We encourage you to bring your favorite brunch casserole, baked or crockpot creations, fruit salads or platters, holiday breads, muffins or cookies. Please

know that it is not “your ticket in”! If you decide you can come that morning we want everyone, with or without a dish, to be in fellowship as Christ wanted us to be! We celebrate His birth! Take time to celebrate with your brothers & sisters joined by our love for Him.

Place settings, coffee, hot chocolate, milk and juice will be provided by the Committee. If you have questions or suggestions please contact Pat Evans or Beth Cameron. Hope we will see you there.

The Fellowship Committee

## Join us as we celebrate Christmas with our Friends-At-Home!

Our Friends-at-home can tune in and watch our services online, but they often miss out on the fellowship and festivities. So, we'll be visiting them in December and you can help by baking a plate of Christmas Cookies and leaving them for the Deacons in the church kitchen on **Sunday, December 10th**. The cookies will be generously arranged on platters and delivered to our Friends-At-Home after church that day. Thank you!

Ladies save the date -

Our Epiphany lunch will be on Sunday, January 7th after worship.

Plan to stay after church for a time of fellowship, worship and good food.

There will be childcare. More details coming soon.

### Operation Christmas Child

“Gracias!” “Vă mulțumesc!” “Dankie!” “Cảm ơn bạn!”

“धन्यवाद!” “Salamat sa iyo!” “Děkuju!”

This is what you would likely hear if we were able to meet the children in some of the countries where Operation Christmas Child is sending shoeboxes filled with your gifts. Our congregation was very generous with their donations, and we were able to send out 41 shoeboxes to be received by needy children across the globe. We are grateful for your overwhelming response, and look forward to working with you to pack more shoeboxes on 2018. Please continue to pray that the boxes get to the children they are intended for, and that as these dear ones receive their shoeboxes and hear the presentation of the gospel message, that they will come to a saving knowledge of the One who loves them and will never leave them.

On behalf of the Deacons,  
Lisa White

## DECEMBER SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEERS

**Infant /Todler Nursery**

Jenn Gonzales  
 Dec 3 – Tina & Skylar  
 McDougall  
 Dec 10 – Ken Bain,  
 Katie Schneible  
 Dec 17 – Mark Wohlleben,  
 Beth Cameron  
 Dec 24 – Betty Reynolds,  
 Donna Wohlleben  
 Dec 31 – Bri Knowlton,  
 Corinne Fitzgerald

**Food Pantry – Saturday, 10 a.m.**

Dec 2 – Dianna & Kermit Monroe  
 Dec 9 – Lisa White, Peggy Ayers  
 Dec 16 – Debbie & Matt Randles  
 Dec 23 – Diana Eggleston, Loanne Bain  
 Dec 30 – Ron & Kay Williamson

**Open Door Soup Kitchen – Lunch- Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>**

Jan Cole, Marion Miller

**Open Door Soup Kitchen – Lunch- Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup>**

Bea Neron, Val McMurray

**Open Door Soup Kitchen – Dinner-Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

Andy & Beth Cook

**Greeters**

Dec 3 – Mary Beth Jones, Linda LaRock  
 Dec 10 – Marge Randles, Barb Munger-Russell  
 Dec 17 – Ray Steidle Family  
 Dec 24 – Andy Cook Family  
 Dec 31 – Jr/Sr High Sunday School

**Preschool Nursery**

Jenn Bushway  
 Dec 3 – Corinne Genovese  
 Dec 10 – Roxanne Jenkins  
 Dec 17 – Matt Randles  
 Dec 24 – Jessie Steidle  
 Dec 31 – Janet Townsend

**Children's Church**

Dec 3 – Kim McLean  
 Dec 10 – Wes Clark  
 Dec 17 –  
 Dec 24 –  
 Dec 31 –

**Food Pantry****Item of the Month**

Hamburger Helper,  
 Personal Care Items

**Ushers**

Dec 3 – Tom & Michele Bromley,  
 Rich & Marcia Monroe  
 Dec 10 – Ray Steidle Family  
 Dec 17 – Duane, Jen & Caleb Flower,  
 Alyce Linscott  
 Dec 24 – Matt Lohret Family  
 Dec 31 – Jr/Sr High Sunday School