

Presbyterian Press



December
2023



Our former minister, Bliss Carwright (1960's era), brought the idea for the "Hanging of the Greens" from his former church and contacted me to create the same idea at our First United Presbyterian Church in Bellefontaine. I asked my good friend, Joanna Dodge to help me with the plan.

The Rev. Thomas Stout (1970's era) could not stand the "hanging" and its connotation and from then on it has remained the "Festival of the Greens".

It is the highlight of the Advent Season at our church and I still look forward to it each year. It is a special and lovely ceremony ushering in the Christmas season.

—Joanne Ritter



O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel...

A Chubby Snowman

A chubby little snowman
had a carrot nose.
Along came a bunny,
and what do you suppose?

That hungry little bunny,
looking for some lunch,
Grabbed that snowman's nose,
Nibble, nibble, crunch!



The Candle of Hope
Therefore, the Lord himself will
give you a sign: The virgin will
conceive and give birth to a son
and will call him IMMANUEL.
Isaiah 7:14

Everyone knows that we were lucky
to move into a new and wonderful
home a year ago.

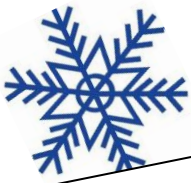
Going through all of those boxes
and trying to downsize was
interesting to say the very least.

In one of those boxes, I found a set
of dolls I purchased when
I spent my last family Christmas
in Florida, as a child.

Two rag dolls, so precious to me.
One was light skinned, the other
dark skinned. They are now
displayed proudly, sitting on a
bench together in our new home.

Sue Dearwester





I am remembering a cold winter evening in Erie, Pennsylvania. We were at my Grandfather's House on East Twenty Fourth Street. My parents and grandparents were playing cards at the kitchen table. I left the smoke-filled house to get some fresh air. A single streetlight on the corner shined on the bare branches of the trees and made shadows in the corners of houses. A car went by. It had chains on its rear tires and they broke the silence with their metallic jingle. The odor of burning coal filled the air. A boat horn echoed from the bay.

As I stood on the corner, snow began to fall. The flakes were the huge, fluffy kind that brushed against my face softly and melted on my tongue. They came to rest on my plaid jacket.

Church bells began to chime, calling people to evening services and I sang "Silent Night, Holy Night" against the chimes.

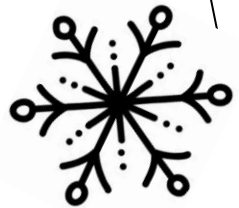
Cold air began to penetrate my jacket and I scurried back into the house. I was greeted with cigarette smoke and the sounds of laughter. Someone had won the hand and the adults were chattering about the cards they had been dealt and the cards that would have won for them, if only they could have been drawn.

The seasons of Advent and Christmas are like my walk for fresh air. For a period of time the birth of a child who grew to be the extraordinary man who became the savior of humankind settles around us like snowflakes. May that story, once again, season our lives with love and joy and peace.

~ Woody Amidon



Read Isaiah 40:1-5



Genesis 9:1-17

O CHRISTMAS TREE (German carol)

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How lovely are your branches.
In summer sun, in winter snow,
A dress of green you always show.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How lovely are your branches.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
With happiness we greet you.
When decked with candles once a year,
You fill our hearts with yuletide cheer.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
With happiness we greet you.



The Legend of the Mistletoe

In the Norse culture, the mistletoe plant was a sign of love and peace.

The story goes that the goddess, Figg lost her son, Baldur to an arrow made of mistletoe.

After his death, she vowed that mistletoe would kiss anyone who passed beneath, so long as it was never again used as a weapon.



The Candle of Peace

Glory to God in the highest
heaven, and on earth peace to
those on whom his favor rests.

Luke 2:14

**I will honor Christmas
in my heart, and try
to keep it all the year.**

'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'



Jerry Ritter was stationed in Germany and claimed it was great! He traveled all over Europe while stationed there. He read in the Stars and Stripes Newspaper that the Ohio Wesleyan Girls Glee Club would be singing nearby and he traveled to visit us.

And that is how our romance began!

~Joanne Ritter

Have you ever felt the magic
On a frosty winter night,
When you walked within a wonderland
Of crystal flakes of white?

It brings back joyful memories
Of days of long ago,
When your heart found perfect happiness
In gentle falling snow.

You remember many happy times,
The snow forts that you built,
Each chubby smiling snowman
With his funny hat atilt.

The sleigh rides and the laughter
All seem to echo still,
And again you see your merry friends
Who slid upon the hill

A snowfall's magic wonder
Brings back the long ago,
And if you don't believe me
Take an evening walk in snow.

L.P. Larson





Family Memories

-Rick A. Conley-

There are those special memories, I cherish through the years.

Most of them are happy ones; a few are touched by tears.

They all become more beautiful, the older now they grow.

And with their age, they take their place as days of long ago.

There are pictures of the past for which I sometimes yearn.

But which I know so well is gone, and which cannot return.

And yet those memories play an important part,

As they inspire or console the heart.

The Legend of the Christmas Tree

Two little children were sitting by the fire one cold winter's night.

All at once they heard a timid knock at the door, and one ran to open it.

There, outside in the cold and the darkness, stood a child with no shoes upon his feet and clad in thin, ragged garments. He was shivering with cold, and he asked to come in and warm himself.

"Yes, come," cried both the children;

"you shall have our place by the fire. Come in!"

They drew the little stranger to their warm seat and shared their supper with him, and gave him their bed, while they slept on a hard bench.

In the night they were awakened by strains of sweet music and, looking out, they saw a band of children in shining garments approaching the house.

They were playing on golden harps, and the air was full of melody.

Suddenly the Stranger Child stood before them; no longer cold and ragged, but clad in silvery light. His soft voice said: "I was cold and you took Me in.

I was hungry, and you fed Me. I was tired, and you gave Me your bed.

I am the Christ Child, wandering through the world to bring peace and happiness to all good children. As you have given to Me, so may this tree every year give rich fruit to you."

So saying, He broke a branch from the fir tree that grew near the door, and He planted it in the ground and disappeared. But the branch grew into a great Tree, and every year it bore wonderful golden fruit for the kind children.



The Candle of Joy
Re-joice in the Lord
always! I will say it
again: Re-joice!
Let your gentleness be
evident to all. The
Lord is near!
Philippians 4:4-5



The Candle of Love

For God so loved the world that
he gave his one and only Son.
That whoever believes in him
shall not perish but have
everlasting life.

John 3:16



O Christmas Tree
O Christmas Tree
How lovely are your
branches!

I am thinking of a family reunion near the town of Northeast, Pennsylvania. I was maybe five years old. The picnic shelters were on top of a hill. A stream ran through the park on its way to Lake Erie. I followed my older cousins down the hill to the stream, took off my shoes when the cousins did and began wading in the stream. The water was cold and refreshing and I could see little living things in the water. I fell behind the others. Suddenly there was a sharp feeling in the bottom of my right foot. I looked down and saw blood in the water. It was coming from my foot. I began to scream.

My Father came down the embankment and was the first to rescue me. He carried me up the hill and, when he saw the gash in my foot, called for a towel. "We have to get him to a doctor," he said as we waited for the towel.

He wrapped my foot in the towel and put me in the back seat of our Chevy. My Mother got in beside me and comforted me as Dad drove the twenty miles back to Erie. It was a weekend, but the doctor was in. However, he did not have any anesthesia to dull the pain while he sewed up my wound. So, my parents had to hold me still while the doctor worked on my foot.

Emergency rooms were not used so frequently when I was five years old. Thanks to my parents' use of the towel, I did not bleed to death. And, as for holding me down, it became an important part of the story. The fact that my parents had to "hold me down", gave me bragging rights. I had "weathered not one but two storms".

Today, more than eighty years later, when I can get my body to cooperate, I can still see the faint scars on the bottom of my foot.

Life is like that, isn't it? Emergencies take our total attention, they each give us a story we can tell, they leave us with scars. But, having survived, we can brag about how someone saved us.

Brag about God today!

Read Psalm 8

~Woody Amidon



Is every day a Holly-Day at your house? It will be with these cookies!

Holly Cookies

- 1/2 stick butter
- 18 large marshmallows
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- Green food coloring
- 2 C. Corn Flakes
- Small, round red candies

Melt the marshmallows and butter over low heat.

Remove from heat, add vanilla and food coloring. This mixture will be dark green, gently stir in Corn Flakes until they are well coated. Drop by teaspoonfuls on wax paper. Add two or three red candies and let stand on the wax paper overnight.



THIS RECIPE APPROVED BY HOLLY CORE AND HOLLY VANBUSKIRKI!



Christmas Tree!

Every _____ we _____ to a tree
(month) (verb)
 _____ far away. Not just any _____
(place) (adjective)
 farm, a _____ tree _____. My dad
(adjective) (place)
 and I _____ onto the _____ to _____
(verb) (noun) (verb)
 for the perfect _____. Some people like
(noun)
 them _____ and _____ and some like
(adjective) (adjective)
 them _____ and fat. We are searching
(color)
 for a tall and _____ one! "Over there!" I
(adjective)
 exclaim, "Dad it's over there!" Off we _____
(verb)
 saw in hand to _____ this year's _____
(verb) (noun)
 down. _____ it's _____ finally!
(exclamation) (holiday)



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Wordsearch

Search for the words going up, down, left and right.

T	U	K	E	B	S	N	Y	Y	V	G	I	I	O	X
L	D	P	Y	O	O	V	F	Q	S	N	O	G	N	U
U	S	G	N	I	T	E	R	G	I	W	Q	Z	B	
J	D	X	D	E	J	O	W	E	I	L	L	T	K	R
J	J	O	B	E	K	T	O	D	N	O	W	N	E	Q
Q	U	S	R	R	N	E	B	D	G	R	R	E	C	K
Q	S	A	N	T	A	L	R	M	E	A	E	M	X	V
P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	X	R	C	A	A	I	Y
I	Z	M	J	X	F	S	F	U	B	M	T	N	Y	U
J	E	D	Q	T	E	I	Z	B	R	C	H	R	M	L
X	B	D	N	R	L	M	M	C	E	K	V	O	K	E
M	L	M	X	S	T	R	M	F	A	X	N	I	Q	T
M	S	Z	Z	E	Q	S	W	U	D	N	D	L	Q	I
H	I	H	A	N	U	T	C	R	A	C	K	E	R	D
V	R	F	A	B	K	W	T	S	E	V	L	E	N	E

YULETIDE
GREETINGS
CAROLING
PRESENTS

WREATH
NUTCRACKER
TREE
MISTLETOE

SANTA
GINGERBREAD
ORNAMENT
ELVES



My Grandmother Powers never did learn to drive, and when my grandfather passed away she had to fly from upstate New York to be with us in Columbus. It was always very exciting to go to the airport to pick her up at baggage claim to gather her two older suitcases. One would be filled with clothes for her stay and the other would be filled with cookies that she had baked. When she went home this suitcase held all her gifts from us. Christmas was the one and only time of the year that we could have cookies for breakfast. There was a special plate that was brought down from the cupboard and filled with all the goodies. Each one of us had our favorites she would always bring. I liked the butterscotch chews she called them. I have heard people call them blondies around here and my brother Dave liked the molasses ones which Anne's family called molasses crinkles. I ask Anne to make them now for him. And since Grandma grew up on a farm not one of the cookies had chocolate as an ingredient. She would call them old fashioned cookies but to us they were just delicious. Her cut outs were perfect with a type of hard icing made of marshmallow whip that I have never been able to make, there were cookies with raisins and currents, and some that looked like little fruit cakes. moist and full of flavor and another favorite of mine were the springerlies with just a touch of anise spice .

~ Beth Powers



YOUR REINDEER NAME

@TASTEOPHOME

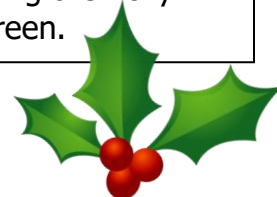
FIRST LETTER OF FIRST NAME + **BIRTH MONTH**

A Jolly	N Bright	JANUARY Jingle
B Frosty	O Hoppy	FEBRUARY Peppermint
C Sparkly	P Flying	MARCH Ginger
D Dazzling	Q Cozy	APRIL Snowball
E Prancing	R Delightful	MAY Mistletoe
F Merry	S Smiling	JUNE Cocoa
G Spiced	T Minty	JULY Spirit
H Icy	U Frigid	AUGUST Holly
I Shiny	V Tart	SEPTEMBER Bob
J Misty	W Magical	OCTOBER Cheer
K Hungry	X Angelic	NOVEMBER Dancer
L Sweet	Y Warm	DECEMBER Tinsel
M Toasty	Z Hopeful	

The Legend of the Holly

One Christmas story tells that a Holly Bush sprouted leaves with thorns to hide and protect baby Jesus from King Herod's men.

As the myth goes, Jesus reciprocated the deed by making the holly an evergreen.





Christmas: Sometime around 2011, Dick and I made the decision to not buy Christmas gifts for our family. Both of our children were married and had their own families, 6 grandchildren in all.

Starting in 2011 we did what we coined “Christmas in July”. Every year we treated 12 of us to a long weekend somewhere. Mostly we went to Mohican State Park, rented a boat on Pleasant Lake and had so much fun playing and eating and enjoying our time together. Other places included Oglesbay, Punderson, and Traverse City, as well as Catawba Island and Sandusky.

When Dick died in 2017, I didn’t know if I could do it alone. So we went to Catawba. In 2018 we were back at Mohican.

This year, 2023 found us mourning my son’s death and no one wanted to do anything much.

Instead, Parent Weekend at UC brought all of us together where we ate, played and walked a lot! But we were together. It was not traditional, but it worked. I will continue as long as I can to keep all of us together and perhaps there will be add-ons in the future to the family, God willing. ~Pat Ortli



O Little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie...



When I was young, we always had to spend our Christmases in Florida where my Grandma lived. I didn’t like to do that because I just knew Santa did not know where I was!

When I was nine years old, I came down the stairs in the morning and there she was, sitting on a chair, a baby doll that was life size! Her dress would fit a year-old baby!

I was so happy to be at home, Santa knew exactly where to find me and brought me the doll of my dreams!!



Sue Dearwester

A Christmas Memory



-Cindy Ashton Jenkins

One Christmas that I remember especially vividly was when I was about four years old. Back in “those days” toys were not as elaborate as they are now, and the variety of them was not nearly so great. My parents, being of modest means, could not afford too many of them, which made them all the more special. In fact, the only other time of year I got toys (besides Christmas) was on my birthday, which was way back in April. So, by the time Christmas came around, the excitement and anticipation of it was almost too much for me to bear. Although I knew better than to ask for too many things, I do remember writing letters to Santa and on this particular Christmas there was one special toy that I wanted him to bring more than anything.

So that Christmas Eve, just like we did every year, our family attended the beautiful candlelight communion service at our church. When we got home, we began the ritual of getting ready for bed. I remember how I used to wear my best pajamas, and I would lay my robe and slippers carefully on the foot of the bed, all ready to jump into on Christmas morning. Looking back, I can’t understand why I did this; I never ever wore my robe and slippers any other time! But I was trying so hard to be a good little girl and do everything just right, so that Santa Claus would be sure to come.

After putting out milk and cookies, and a carrot for the reindeer, it was time to go to bed. For this one special night, my mother placed a small wind-up alarm clock in my room, and all night long I watched that clock. The reason it was there was so that I wouldn’t get up too early. There was a certain “time” that I could get up, and I was warned that if I got up before that, or if I even peed out of my room to see the presents before it was “time”, Santa would bring no toys – just a big bundle of sticks!

So, all night I watched that clock. I watched it and listened to it tick and watched it some more. I waited and waited for Christmas morning to come, and I watched the hands of that clock crawl slowly around, hour after hour, minute after minute, until I could not stand it anymore! “Just a quick peek” I thought to myself; just fast enough to see if there was anything under the tree. Just to make sure that Santa Claus had really come! Just to know if he had been there.

Still, I was terrified. What if I did peek out and all my toys turned into sticks? I thought about it for a long time, and then with much trepidation and fear decided to risk it. I crept to the doorway of my room and quick as a flash stuck my head out, and then back in. It was almost too fast to even see anything, but I knew what I had seen and I ran back to my room crying and sobbing. Oh, how horrible! What was I going to do? The unthinkable had really happened: I had gotten STICKS for Christmas!

I knew it was true, for I had even seen the sticks with my very own eyes. There they were, in a big round can about two feet high, just full of those terrible brown sticks. Why, some of them were even sticking out of the top!

I didn’t know how I was ever going to go out to that Christmas tree. My parents would see those sticks, and they would know. They would know I had gotten up early, even though I had the clock! What misery I was in. If only time would stand still, and the hands of that clock would just stop! Finally, it was time to get up and there was no putting it off. I decided I might as well go on out there and face my parents and those dreadful sticks. Just get it over with – the sooner, the better.

So, I went out, and there were my parents waiting for me. They had gotten up first, and they were smiling. Why would they be smiling when such a horrible thing had happened? With a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes, I forced myself to look down at those sticks. And there, carefully arranged so that some of them stuck out of the can was the one toy that I had wanted more than anything that Christmas. . . . my brand new set of "Lincoln Logs"!!

Only the young will brave the snow
And catch the flakes and watch them go
In swirling patterns up and down
The length and breadth of all in town.



Only the young can laugh to see
White, sudden blossoms on a tree
That were not there an hour ago
Or lift their hearts to see the snow
Reach out its hand and turn the night
Into a wonderland of white.



Hark!

The herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!



The old will rise and turn the love
When frozen fists of snowflakes knock
Upon the pane, along the sill

And break the pine trees on a hill
The old will draw the curtains tight
And have no traffic with the night.

But they will stir the fire and pile
The hearth with logs, and afterwhile,
When they are nodding in it's glow,
Live once again lost years of snow.

Dear Santa,
Please bring us a
new and wonderful
Minister!



A story from Ideals magazine loved by Vicky Shields

*When Father Carves the Duck
by Ernest Vincent Wright*

*We all look on with anxious eyes
When Father carves the duck
And mother almost always sighs
When Father carves the duck*

*Then all of us prepare to rise
And hold our bibs before our eyes
And be prepared for some surprise
When Father carves the duck.*

*He braces up and grabs a fork
Whene'er he carves a duck
And won't allow a soul to talk
Until he's carved the duck.*

*The fork is jabbed into the sides
Across the breast the knife he slide
While every careful person hides
From flying chips of duck.*

*The platter's always sure to slip
When Father carves a duck.
And how it makes the dishes skip!
Potatoes fly amuck!*

*The squash and cabbage leap in space
We get some gravy in our face
And Father mutters Hindu grace
Whene'er he carves a duck.*

*We then have learned to walk around
the dining room and pluck
From off the windowsills and walls
Our share of Father's duck.*

*While Father growls and blows and jaws
And swears the knife was full of flaws
And Mother laughs at him because
He couldn't carve a duck.*



I saw three
ships come
sailing in, on
Christmas Day,
on Christmas
Day...

10 Facts About Christmas Trees

1. The first written reference to a Christmas tree was in Germany in 1531.
2. Evergreen trees were used to celebrate the winter season before the birth of Christ.
3. Using small candles to light Christmas trees began in the 17th century.
4. The first artificial Christmas tree was created in Germany. It was made of dyed goose feathers.
5. Christmas trees have been sold in the U. S. since 1850.
6. In 2011 over 30 million live Christmas trees were sold in the U. S. for a market value of over \$1 billion.
7. An acre of Christmas trees provides the daily oxygen needed by 18 people.
8. Every year there are approximately 350 million Christmas trees growing on U.S. farms.
9. Commercial Christmas trees are grown in all 50 states.
10. Every year since 1947, the people of Oslo, Norway have given a Christmas tree to the city of Westminster, England. It is given in gratitude for the assistance given during World War II.

MORMON MEDIA NETWORK



I stopped believing
in Santa Claus when
I was six. Mother took
me to see him in a
department store and he
asked for my autograph.

SHIRLEY TEMPLE



Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
will begin at 7:00pm.

Please join us, in person or through our streaming capabilities,
for this wonderful evening of hope, peace, joy and love.





GOOD NEWS!



Congratulations Rylee McCully, **granddaughter of Art and Betty Lloyd**, who has been named Senior of the Month at Riverside High School!



Christmas "Elves" have been hard at work decking downtown Bellefontaine for the Holidays.

Joanne Ritter and friends have been taking care of all the decor for many years and took advantage of the warm temperatures on Monday, putting on the finishing touches.

Billions of white lights, hundreds of feet of garland, and several dozen red bows dress up downtown Bellefontaine and make it a special place to shop, dine, and enjoy.



Joanne Ritter, center, was honored Wednesday, Nov. 15, by the Bellefontaine Shade Tree Commissioner for her more than 30 years of service to the organization. Bellefontaine Mayor Ben Stahler, right, reads a proclamation for Ritter, noting her efforts to "generously share her artistic time and talents to continue to join with friends to make Bellefontaine a beautiful place to live, work and play." Shade Tree Commission Chairman and Logan County Commissioner Joe Antram also offers applause. Bellefontaine has been designated a Tree City USA since 1981. A native of

Cleveland, Mrs. Ritter attended Ohio Wesleyan University and met her husband, Bellefontaine native Jerome "Jerry" Ritter, at the Brussels World's Fair in 1958 when he was a soldier and she was performing with the Ohio Wesleyan Women's Glee Club. Mrs. Ritter also obtained a degree in art and taught briefly before staying home with the couple's three children.



Congratulations to our youth who have made the Honor Roll in the Bellefontaine City Schools!! **Ella Costin, Emma Costin, Kaeleigh Flora!**

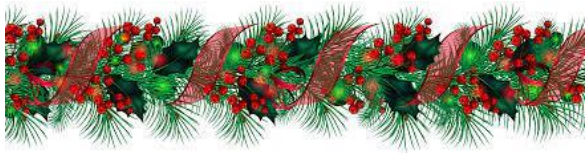
From Riverside Local Schools. . . **Rylee McCully, Hayden McCully!**



Reed Kennedy and his gang of dreamboats helped celebrate the 50th day of school in style! Donning their favorite 50's outfits, the students had a blast with a hula hoop contest, a sock hop and a drive-in movie!

The highlight of the day was root beer floats provided by the PTO!

They had a day made in the shade!



THANK YOU'S!

The Mission Committee would like to thank everyone who has volunteered for **Dinner at the Pres!!**

We have had a wonderful time in fellowship with our guests!!



I want to thank the Christian Ed Committee for the wonderful well wishes and the Puzzle and beautiful card!! I can't believe I have taught Sunday School for 40 years! First at the Methodist Church when my oldest son was just three to moving to the Presbyterian Church and continuing it with you all. I have seen a lot of kids grow up and then have kids of their own, it was a real pleasure to be in a classroom with these kids and doing all the fun inventive things with them every week. They taught me as much as I taught them!! I will always remember it as a great memory! Now on to helping the "big" Kids and our community. Blessings to you all, Vicky Shields

Dear Church Friends,

Thank you so much for the thoughtful "Happy Birthday" poster! Pat stopped by with it Sunday and it was good to visit with her for a bit. Thanks again for your thoughtfulness! Sincerely, Dorothy Snapp



THOSE NEEDING OUR SPECIAL PRAYERS!

The Albanos- Sue and David, both with health issues

Jadyn Plaughter- Nephew of Gary and Lois McKenzie, leukemia

Currently in remission, Praise the Lord!

Nancy Scouten- Mother of Linda Costin, health issues

The Amidons- Our ENERGIZER BUNNIES, prayers for continuing health

Tina Deardurff- health issues

Carl Wunderle- Brother of Andy Wunderle, cancer

Sherri Ullom- Friend of Jill Butler, health issues

Kathy Jo Putt- Daughter of Ralph and Kathy Morrison, effects of head trauma

Vicki Shafer- Friend of Karen Baldwin, health issues

Ralph Morrison, health issues

Rose Gunkle- Aunt of Michelle Suman, health issues

Kris Sutterfield- Mother of Michelle Suman

Mark Brienza- Brother of Anne, leukemia

Cameron Deardurff – Diabetic issues

Layla Deardurff – Feeding issues



WITH US IN SPIRIT!

Sue Albano 1409 Whispering Pines Lane Belleft. 43311

Lois Ashworth 209 E. Glen Belleft. 43311

Janet Brunke 4888 Co. Rd. #55 Belleft. 43311

Barbara Bradford 221 School St. Belleft. 43311

Bob Carter 6559 US Rt 68 S Memory Unit W. Liberty 43357

Joyce Core 2450 Co. Rd. 118 Rushsylvania 43347

Bud & Mona Eichholtz 1328 Omaha Belleft. 43311

Anne Heinlen 741 E. Sandusky Ave. Belleft. 43311

Talma Heydinger 709 Iroquois Rd. Belleft. 43311

Marcella Neeld 541 Center St. Belleft. 43311

Nate Weber 608 Newford Dr. Belleft. 43311





CELEBRATING A BIRTHDAY!

December 3: Sara Stahler

December 4: Carla Murdock

December 8: Anne Brienza

December 11: Judy Oldiges

December 12: Kim Forsythe

December 17: Adam Wunderle

December 18: Nora Lentz

December 20: Woody Amidon

December 21: Billie Jo Kennedy

December 22: Denny Lane

December 24: Eric Caughenbaugh

December 26: Sandi Chervenak, Julie Pulfer

December 27: Anne Heinlen

December 30: Calen McClelland



CELEBRATING A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!

December 22: Michael and Kelly LeVan

December 29: Bill and Mary Ann Patterson



COMMITTEE CALENDAR!



The **Season of Pledging** is upon us! If you have not received information from the Stewardship and Finance Committee outlining how you can pledge for the coming year of 2024, please contact the Church Office.

The rebuilding of our church is going to be up to all of us! We can work together to make this church all that we want it to be!

If you have any questions, please contact any member of the Stewardship and Finance Committee.



The **Mission Committee** will be compiling and distributing our Annual Christmas Food Baskets on Saturday, December 16.

Volunteers are needed for this day, any help will be GREATLY appreciated!!



Our Daily Bread Bakers deliver desserts to Our Daily Bread on the 3rd Monday of each month between the hours of 8:30 am and 6:00 pm.

December 18

Bonnie Conley.....Becky Coy
Nancy Farrington.....Patty Fitzpatrick



MEETING IN DECEMBER!

The **CE Committee** meeting time is to be determined.

The **Church Growth and Member Care Committee** meeting time is to be determined.

The **Deacons** meet Monday December 4, 5:00pm in the Library.

The **Mission Committee** meets Tuesday December 12, 6:00pm in the Church Office.

The **Worship Committee** will meet and discuss plans through email.

The **Stewardship and Finance Committee** meets Monday December 18, 12:00pm in the Library.

The **Session** meets Thursday December 21, 7:00pm in the Library.

The **PWA Leadership** will not meet in December.

The **Book Club** will not be meeting in December. Our next meeting will be January 16, 6:00pm place to be determined. We will be reading "Tomorrow & Tomorrow & Tomorrow" by Gabrielle Zevin.

Any questions for the **Property Committee**, see Karen Brady.

Any questions for the **Church Growth and Member Care Committee**, see Beth Powers



SERVING IN DECEMBER!

Deacons On Call: Phyllis Lyons, Betty Lloyd

Worship Leaders:

December 3: Woody Amidon December 10: Sue Crawfis December 17: Bridget Hawkins
December 24: Beth Powers, December 31: Sara Stahler, Holly VanBuskirk

Welcome Team:

Bridget Hawkins, Cindy Jenkins, Pat Ortli, Holly VanBuskirk

Church Open and Close:

December 3: Sara Stahler December 10: Sara Stahler December 17: Sara Stahler
December 24: Sara Stahler December 31: Sara Stahler

Church Elder On-Call:

November 26 – December 2: Sara Stahler December 3 – 9: Vicky Shields
December 10 – 16: Brandon Standley December 17 - 23: Bridget Hawkins
December 24 – 30: Anne Brienza December 31 – January 6: Beth Powers



FINANCIAL FOCUS!

November 5, 2023

On-Line Attendance: 10

Sunday School Attendance: 38

Worship Attendance: 74

Received To Date: \$162,446.49

Sunday School Offering: \$34.00

Weekly Giving: \$9,235.00

-\$25,383.51

Needed Weekly: \$41.50

Needed Weekly: \$4,174.00

Needed To Date: \$187,830.00

November 12, 2023

On-Line Attendance: 8

Sunday School Attendance: 33

Worship Attendance: 85

Received To Date: \$168,297.20

Sunday School Offering: \$42.00

Weekly Giving: \$5,850.71

-\$25,383.51

Needed Weekly: \$41.50

Needed Weekly: \$4,174.00

Needed To Date: \$193,680.71

November 19, 2023

On-Line Attendance: 14

Sunday School Attendance: 34

Worship Attendance: 86

Received To Date: \$170,314.91

Sunday School Offering: \$42.00

Weekly Giving: \$2,017.71

-\$27,539.80

Needed Weekly: \$41.50

Needed Weekly: \$4,174.00

Needed To Date: \$197,854.71

November 26, 2023

On-Line Attendance: 11

Sunday School Attendance: 33

Worship Attendance: 68

Received To Date: \$175,327.62

Sunday School Offering: \$28.00

Weekly Giving: \$4,985.71

-\$26,701.09

Needed Weekly: \$41.50

Needed Weekly: \$4,174.00

Needed To Date: \$202,028.71

The Stewardship and Finance Committee would like to thank everyone who has graciously and generously made their pledge for 2024!

If you have not done so and would like to make a pledge, please contact Holly in the Church Office at 937-592-6611 or at secretary@bellefontainepres.com.

Your pledge is between you and the Lord. It is your private matter, with only one person knowing the exact number. If you cannot continue your pledge, due to unforeseen circumstances, we absolutely understand that and no one will ever speak to you on that issue. Whether you prefer to give weekly, monthly or quarterly, it is always appreciated! An amount that fits your life is important to you and us both! Give what you can without fear of rejection or exclusion. Your gift is working for our Lord.



LOOKING AHEAD!



Our Daily Bread Bakers deliver desserts to Our Daily Bread on the 3rd Monday of each month between the hours of 8:30 am and 6:00 pm.

January 15, 2024

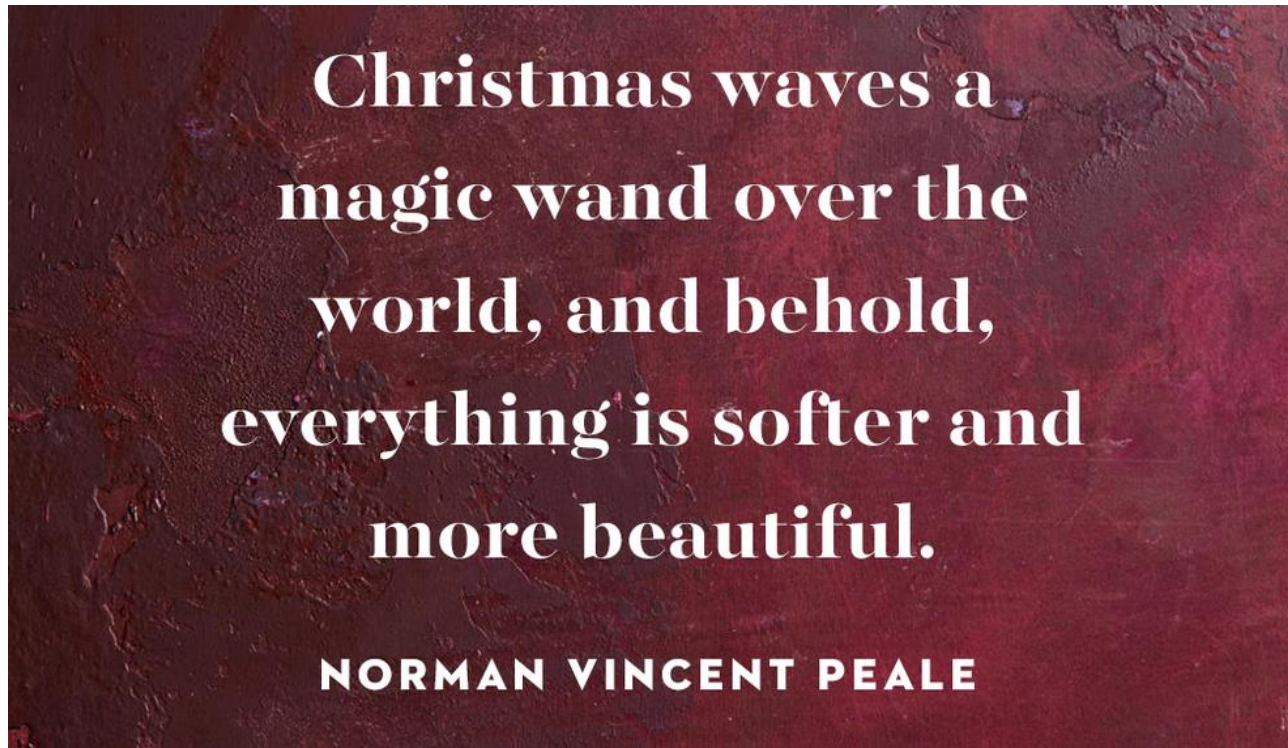
Bridget Hawkins.....Natasha Kennedy
Mary Jane Lane.....Betty Lloyd



The **Church Growth and Member Care Committee** is making plans for the Second Annual Winter Carnival to be held January 20!! Last years event was such fun!! They are looking for a second committee to assist them with food/lunch. If you are interested in helping, please contact Beth Powers or any member of the CGMC!!



Also in the works for the **CGMC** is a Church Family Game Night that will be scheduled in February!! More information to come!!





Each month, the **Board of Deacons** encourages you to help meet the needs of our 1st UPC family through your donation to our **2-Cents-of-Compassion Offering**. Your donation will support the Deacons in their effort to support those members of our church who are in need. Donate 2 cents (or more) for every compassionate thought you have had in the last month and place it in the “2 Cents of Compassion” envelope included in Sunday’s bulletin.

Our Lord Jesus said, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”

DINNER AT THE PRES! There will be no Dinner at the Pres in December. The Mission Committee would like to thank everyone who has volunteered with this program since we started back up! Our Daily Bread will continue to need our help with serving on certain days of each month. Four or five volunteers are needed. If you are available to help, please contact Evelyn at 937-592-6325!



God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

Through the **Community Cash Program**, shop at Community Market (2 locations, North Main St. and East Sandusky Ave.), bring in your receipts and place them in the Donation Centers outside the sanctuary (Narthex) or in the Fellowship Hall. A portion of your sale will support 1st UPC’s Sharing Fund, providing assistance to our church families as needed.

“Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”

Use your Kroger Reward Card and support Youth Mission Trips!

To make an automatic donation with your Kroger Plus Card, go to krogercommunityrewards.com. Log in or set up a new account. Our “NPO” (non-profit organization) ID number is **HD313** and is listed as First (not 1st) United Presbyterian Church. Each year, 1st UPC folks who have named 1st UPC as their charity contribute \$800-\$1000 a year to support our youth mission trips. It only takes a little on your part – but it sure helps our community a lot!



“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up.”





"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not:'"

"For behold, I bring unto you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'"

That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.

