



The Exciter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH EAST
25 West Main Street • North East PA 16428 • (814) 725-8641

No. 553

December 2015

THE PASTOR'S PEN

“COME THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS.”

That is a powerful and hopeful prayer, and it is our theme for this year's Advent season. The words are, of course, taken from the title of one of Charles Wesley's more than 6,500 hymns. Wesley's hymn had a very small beginning. It was published in a collection of only eighteen poems. The tune to which we most often sing its words was composed by a young twenty-year-old man named Rowland Prichard. He called the tune “Hyfrydol,” which means “good cheer” in Welsh. Small beginnings and good cheer: that's what Advent is all about, isn't it?

I pray that this will be a blessed Advent for each of you, and I hope that you will again renew your hunger for the return of our King Jesus at each one of our congregation's services and special events. Each Sunday morning we will pick up a theme from “Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus” and reflect upon the ways in which that theme is

played out in the Bible. We will see that our Lord promises a great many benefits to us: Rest, Joy, Grace, and Glory.

We will also be gathering for our most joyful annual traditions: the Advent Program and Dinner on Sunday, December 6, at 4:00 P.M., A Musical Christmas Worship Service on December 20 at 11:00 A.M., our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7:30 P.M. on December 24, and our Christmas Morning Communion Service at 11:00 A.M. on December 25.

I hope to see you at each service and event. May the peace of Christ be with you all!

In His Service,
Pastor Gregg



2015 ANNUAL FAMILY ADVENT DINNER

As you are planning your holiday schedule, mark your calendar and plan to attend our annual Family Advent Program and Dinner on Sunday, December 6 following the Advent Program at 4:00 P.M. Please bring a large dish to share. Ham, drinks, and place settings will be provided. We hope to see you there!

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

- Sunday, December 6 at 4:00 P.M. – Annual Advent Program
- Sunday, December 20 at 11:00 A.M. – A Musical Christmas Worship Service: “A Very Praise Christmas” with our Chancel Choir and Worship Team
- Thursday, December 24 at 7:30 P.M. – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
- Friday, December 25 at 11:00 A.M. – Christmas Morning Worship Service with Communion
- Sunday, December 27 at 8:30 or 11:00 A.M. – Worship Service of Christmas Carols



Pastor Gregg D. Townsend

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.FPCNE.ORG

CLERKS CORNER



Do you have an idea or a suggestion for our church life but don't know who to talk to? Below is a list of our various committees along with the chairperson and a brief description about the committee.

Representative to the Presbytery: Dick Zahner
Liaison between our local church and the regional Presbytery

Mission: Scott Connors
Decisions are made about what local, regional, and world mission projects should be supported by our congregation.

Worship and Music: Marcia Regan
Anything and everything to do with our worship services — from ushers and music to communion and special worship services

Fellowship: Doty Wagner
Creates purposeful time for our congregants to fellowship with one another, such as the Advent dinner

Christian Education: Tom McClure
Plans all Sunday School curriculum, Kirk Kids, Kids' Choir and youth group activities

Finance: Paul Zorzie
Involved with investment oversight, development of annual budget, and short/long term financial planning

Personnel: Vern Hurlburt
Oversees the paid positions of the church and gives performance reviews

Nominating: Rodger Hazen
Suggests qualified members to serve as officers of the church

Membership Development: Pauline Fisher
Works toward greater involvement and participation of our membership in the life of our congregation and mission to the world

Stewardship: Steve Seymour
Focuses mainly on the financial stewardship of our church members, and encouraging members to give generously

TITHING MADE EASY WITH DIRECT DEPOSIT

Sign up to have your church giving done via direct deposit. It's a great way to give your financial support to the church without having to worry about writing a check or putting an envelope in the offering plate each week. Plus if you find it challenging to give regularly, this is a good way to establish the practice of regular giving.

Jean Bahm can get you set up. It's super easy. We have about 15 members who give via direct deposit and THEY LOVE IT! (If you have to change your giving at any point during the year, Jean can also help you adjust your giving if needed.)

PASTORAL COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

The Session recently approved the creation of a Pastoral Communication committee. This committee consists of four Session members plus Pastor Gregg to foster two-way communication with members. Members with concerns, questions, or praises must attend in

person. No letters or emails will be entertained by the committee. If you would like to talk about the life of our congregation, our ministry, and/or our pastoral ministry, please speak with Scott Connors, who is chairing this new committee.

HAVE YOU FILLED OUT A PLEDGE CARD YET?



SAMARITAN'S PURSE – “OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD”

Operation Christmas Child, sponsored by *Samaritan's Purse*, was a huge success. It was the first time in many years that our church participated in spreading the love of Jesus and the message of love, joy, and hope to so many children in other countries who would normally not have a Christmas. Sponsored by the Christian Education and Mission Committees, the youth and adults from our church filled over 50 boxes to be delivered for Christmas—a stellar success! Tom McClure's Cub Scout Troop participated as well, and filled eight boxes. Our abundance of gifts will bless many children around the world, providing them with hope and the message of the love of Jesus Christ. Thanks to all who helped with this mission project.

ADVENT IS APPROACHING

Attention all those young and old who enjoy the festivities of holiday and reflecting upon the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ! You are cordially invited to our Annual Family Advent Program on Sunday, December 6 at 4:00 P.M. The Children and Youth of our church have a meaningful program of “Reflection” planned.

In addition, plan to join your church family for dinner downstairs in Fellowship Hall following the program. We ask that you bring a large dish to share. Ham, drinks, and place settings will be provided.

YOUTH TO HELP PACK COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS BOXES

All the Youth from our congregation are invited to help pack this year's Community Christmas Boxes on December 16 at 7:00 P.M. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. We will meet at FPCNE at 6:00 P.M. for dinner and then walk to St. Paul's to help pack the boxes. Kids can then be picked up at St. Paul's.

PREPARING FOR THE 2016 ANNUAL MISSION TRIP

Mark your calendars for the 2016 Mission Trip during the week of July 10. Stay tuned for upcoming information on fundraising and other details. Please see Donna Banks if you are interested in going on the 2016 Mission Trip or participating in the fundraising events.

CHRISTMAS COOKIES

The Youth will once again be your bakers for the Christmas season. We will be taking orders after the 8:30 and 11:00 A.M. worship services on November 29 and December 6. You may also contact the church office to place an order.

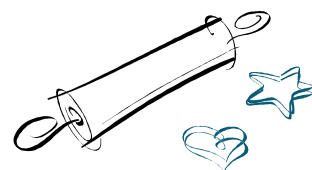
Youth group members are invited to the church for baking on Saturday, December 12 from 10:00 A.M. until about 2:00 P.M.

The Youth are requesting donations of all sorts of baking supplies (flour, sugar, butter, sprinkles, etc.) to help defer the cost of our cookie baking project. If you are able to help, please drop off your donations in the church office.

The price has been frozen at \$10 for a scrumptious plate of 2-dozen cookies and goodies. Cookies will be delivered on Sunday, December 14. Please see Donna Banks if you have any questions or would like to help.

We welcome our youth from grades five through 12 to participate in Youth group activities.

BAKING
for GOOD



COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS BOXES

North East Community Christmas Boxes provide many families with food during the Christmas season. You can support this mission by making a financial contribution and by volunteering. There is a sign-up sheet in the Assembly Room. Our church is responsible for providing about 175 jars of peanut for this year's boxes. If you know of someone in need, please pick up an application in the church office. Fill it out and return to the office by December 6.



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

ATTENTION YOUTH AND ADULTS WHO ENJOY THE FESTIVITIES OF HOLIDAY SINGING!

Please join us for our annual Christmas Caroling to bring some holiday cheer to others. We will meet at the church at 5:30 P.M. on the evening of December 13 to gather together for Christmas Caroling. We will be walking this year, so you will need to dress for the weather. We will carol until about 6:30-7:00 P.M. and then go back to the church for hot chocolate and homemade cookies. It's fun for the whole family!



2016 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN NEEDS YOU!

CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

As we prepare for 2016, would you to consider making a financial pledge to our church? Initial pledge cards were sent several weeks ago. It takes nearly \$225,000 per year to simply cover the basic operations of our church. To date, we have been blessed through our 2016 Stewardship campaign with a total of \$191,681 in pledges from 77 out of our 400 members. This number, of course, is well short of what is needed. **AS A MEMBER OF OUR CHURCH, WE ARE APPEALING TO YOU FOR HELP.** In order to write a responsible and balanced budget, the Session needs to be able to anticipate giving for the coming year. We cannot do this without the pledges of our membership.

Our church has been very fortunate over the past several years. Deficits, which we have faced nine of the past 10 years, have been covered by interest income from those generous members who came before us and left large financial gifts to the church. We cannot depend upon this income much longer. It is our sincere hope that those listing themselves as the current membership of our church will step forward and give as it has been given unto you. As it says in Luke 6:38, *"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."*

May God Bless you now and always,
The Stewardship Committee

MISSION COMMITTEE NEWS

The Mission Committee has been active in the past month. We partnered with the C.E. Committee on Samaritan's Purse "Operation Christmas Child." We set our goals high and had great results, with 53 boxes sent to children all over the world.

We are working on some exciting things for December. We will be cooking and serving a meal to the homeless in Erie at Holy Cross Church. We plan to cook and serve this meal on December 14. We are asking the congregation for their help in making a second meal. We will be providing casseroles as we did last year. Signup sheets will be available in the Assembly Room for meat or veggie casseroles and dessert. A container will be provided, which you can pick up when you sign up. Watch the bulletin and announcements for more information. Please speak with Billie Blosser or Scott Connors for more information.

Mission Committee meetings are held on the second Sunday of the month following the 11:00 A.M. worship service. We are always looking for new members. If you are interested in serving on this important committee, please contact our chairman Scott Connors.

The members of the Mission Committee are:

Scott Connors, Chairman
Ashley Connors
Dean Taylor
Bev Walz
Garrett Connors

Charlene Baird
Billie Blosser
Jessica Albney
Donna Banks
Jerry Weinheimer

Thank you – *Scott Connors*



VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.FPCNE.ORG

PLACE YOUR ORDER FOR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

We are taking orders for red poinsettias from Luke’s Greenhouse to help beautify our sanctuary for the Christmas season. Please complete the order form below, and submit, along with your payment, to the church office by **Sunday, December 13**. The price is **\$9.75**. Checks should be made payable to “First Presbyterian Church” with “poinsettia” on the memo line. If you would like to designate your poinsettia(s) in honor or memory of a loved one, **submit the name(s) to the church office no later than Sunday, December 13** for printing in the bulletin.



_____ Poinsettias @ \$9.75 each

The poinsettia is “IN MEMORY OF” _____

The poinsettia is “IN HONOR OF” _____

This form is submitted by _____

You may pick up your poinsettia after the Christmas Eve Service on December 24. Any poinsettias left at the church will be taken to shut-ins.

✂ Cut here and submit to the church office by December 13 - - - - -

LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT: ANGEL TREE GIFTS



Do you know about the Angel Tree in the Assembly Room? The Angel Tree represents gifts given to the library through the Angel Project.

During the month of December, a variety of books will be on display, which may be purchased and given to the library in honor or memory of a friend or loved one. The books and gift tags are displayed on the table near the Angel Tree. Just fill out the gift tag with the “For” and “From” information, along with a check made out to the “Gertrude Bostwick Memorial Library.” The gift tag may be placed on the tree or given to Jan Trojanowski along with your payment. If Jan is not available, please see any Library Board Member. Your gift is very much appreciated.

Also, we have a new book, *God is in the Hard Stuff* by Bruce Bickel and Stan Jantz, which was given by Jean Bahm. Stop into the library to view the Nativity Tree and other Christmas decorations. While you are in the library, check out the variety of books, and have a very Merry Christmas!

SERVICE SCHEDULES

DATE	USHERS	NURSERY
December 6	Dave Meehl, John Wilcox, Roger Meehl, Dianne Tyler, Evelyn Daughrity	Leah Terry and Payton Lanahan
December 13	Bob & Sandy Nelson, Ron Blosser, Al Mohnkern, Vivian Daughrity	Barb and Harry Blount
December 20	Vern & Kitty Hurlburt, Garrett Connors, Joe & Sue Spacht	John Luchs and Jan Trojanowski
December 27	Kathy & Lynn Peterson, Barb Blount, Steve Seymour, Cole Elkin	Fred and Dianne Lucore
January 3	Dave Meehl, John Wilcox, Roger Meehl, Dianne Tyler, Evelyn Daughrity	Jerry and Nancy Weinheimer
January 10	Bob & Sandy Nelson, Ron Blosser, Al Mohnkern, Vivian Daughrity	Selina and Dave Uglow
January 17	Vern & Kitty Hurlburt, Garrett Connors, Joe & Sue Spacht	Krissy Lane and Julie Cole
January 24	Kathy & Lynn Peterson, Barb Blount, Steve Seymour, Cole Elkin	Paul and Barb Zorzie
January 31	Jerry Weinheimer, Bob Murray, Tom Schenker, Peggy Walsh	Heidi and Tessa Bemis

“LIKE” US ON FACEBOOK, AND KEEP UP ON THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. We post important news and church happenings and upload lots of great photos and videos. Have something you’d like to share? Send it to Jennifer in the Church Office at jspencer@fpcne.org, and we’ll post it for you.





Advent and Christmas

at First Presbyterian Church of North East

Join us for our Advent worship services as we reflect on the Advent carol, "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus." Pastor Gregg Townsend will offer thoughtful and inspiring messages on each Advent theme: Rest, Joy, Grace, and Glory.

Sunday, November 29 AT 8:30 & 11:00 AM

WORSHIP SERVICES

Join us for worship on the first Sunday of Advent at 8:30 or 11:00 AM. We will light the first Advent candle, and Pastor Townsend will offer a message on "Rest."

Sunday, December 6 AT 8:30 & 11:00 AM

WORSHIP SERVICES

Join us for worship on the second Sunday of Advent at 8:30 or 11:00 AM. Pastor Townsend will offer a message on "Joy," and we will light the second Advent candle.

Sunday, December 6 AT 4:00 PM

ADVENT PROGRAM and Dinner

Join us in the Sanctuary at 4:00 PM for our annual Family Advent Program. Dinner follows in Fellowship Hall. Please bring a large dish to share and your own place setting.

Sunday, December 13 AT 8:30 & 11:00 AM

WORSHIP SERVICES

Join us for worship on the third Sunday of Advent at 8:30 or 11:00 A.M. We will light the third Advent candle, and Pastor Townsend will offer a message on "Grace."

Sunday, December 20 AT 11:00 AM

A Musical Christmas Worship Service

Share in this music-filled service on the fourth Sunday of Advent as our Chancel Choir and Worship Team come together to offer a unique worship experience, "A Very Praise Christmas." Pastor Townsend will offer a message on "Glory," and we will light the fourth Advent candle. Stay for a special coffee hour following the service.

Thursday, December 24 AT 7:30 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE Candlelight Service

Join us for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Pastor Townsend will share a special message, we will light the Christ candle, and our Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, and Worship Team will fill the air with music.

Friday, December 25 AT 11:00 AM

CHRISTMAS MORNING Worship Service

Pastor Townsend will lead us in a special Christmas Day service, including the sacrament of communion.



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