



# The Exciter

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

No. 554

January 2016

## THE PASTOR'S PEN

I sometimes make a "New Year's Resolutions" list but not this year. This year I've decided to keep a list of "New Year's Hopes and Dreams" for our congregation, which I plan to bring before God in prayer throughout the year. I thought I'd share that list with you, and perhaps it will inspire you to pray along with me.

First and foremost, I'm hoping that we will take discipleship more and more seriously. I pray that each of us will follow Jesus in a devoted way and that we will in turn make disciples of others, just as he asked us.

Second, I'm hoping that a part of following Jesus will mean that more of our members will become more deeply involved in the life and ministry of our congregation. Currently, about half of the members who attend worship services regularly do nothing more than attend worship. It would be wonderful to see them involved in caring for others and reaching out to our community with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ.

Third, I'm hoping that our Mission Committee will plan more and more activities locally and regionally that will involve our members in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in ways that touch lives in significant ways. One of our elders suggested that our congregation should have a kind of "signature ministry" —

something that we are known for — in the community. This sounds like a terrific idea! Would you pray with me for God's leading us in the right direction? Would you pray about becoming more involved and active?

Fourth, I'm hoping that we will have more fun together fellowshiping with one another. Elder Doty Wagner and the Fellowship Committee are planning a calendar of events for 2016. If you have ideas, please share them with her. If you would like to help out in the planning or making special events happen, please let her know. She and her committee can use all the help they can get. All hands on deck!

Fifth, I'm hoping that we will follow Jesus devotedly in our financial stewardship. It has been wonderful to see a slight increase in pledge giving this year but, honestly, we still have a long way to go. The Bible asks for us to set aside 10% of our income as a tithe to the Lord's house. Will you do that this year? Why not take a chance on using your money God's way? It's the safest investment you can make!

God bless you all in 2016! Here's to hoping, dreaming, and most importantly, praying!  
Happy New Year, everyone!

In the Service of the King,  
*Pastor Gregg*

## SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL MEETING NEWS

Please join us for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, February 14. Once again, the Session has decided to hold the meeting *during* the 11:00 A.M. worship service. This will be a tremendous time of celebration for all that God has done in our midst in 2015 and a time to look and pray about where we are headed in 2016 and beyond. **THERE WILL BE ONLY ONE WORSHIP SERVICE THAT MORNING.** The Session will host a luncheon following the meeting. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.



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## Sunday School Classes

It has been a meaningful, fun-filled fall and early winter in our Sunday School classes. We have many dedicated teachers that offer their gifts of teaching each week to our children, adolescents, and adults. Everyone is enjoying learning and participating as they continue their journey in surrounding themselves with the teachings and Word of God.

The Christian Education Committee will be making a few additions to our Christian Education programs over the winter months. Stay tuned for future announcements for upcoming CE opportunities.

## Youth Update

Our youth members have been extremely busy over the past couple of months. Many of our children and youth participated in our annual Advent program, entitled "What Is the Meaning of This Season?"

Our children and youth from first grade through high school participated in the program with special music, by Ali Nagle, and scripture readings throughout the afternoon by several of our youth members. In addition, our Kids' Choir, with a solo speaking part by John McClure, sang two beautiful Christmas songs.

The youth once again tackled the project of cookie baking. Several of our youth and their parents spent the first few weeks of December baking, decorating, plating, and selling cookies to the members of our congregation. More than 100 dozen cookies were made and sold. Kudos to the youth for a great job!

Upcoming youth events will include an outing to be decided upon by the youth, the *Souper Bowl of Caring* collection and lunch, a (possible) Otters hockey game, and planning for a Mission trip this summer.



## Souper Bowl of Caring

**THE CHALLENGE: To surround the perimeter of the sanctuary with soup and other non-persishable foods.**

The youth and the Mission Committee are sponsoring a soup and non-perishable food drive to help the food pantry feed members of our community this winter. Will you accept the challenge and help us meet our goal of surrounding the perimeter of the sanctuary with soup and other non-perishable food items?

We will begin collecting food on January 10 and continue to collect cans of soup and other non-perishable foods through February 7. On February 7, the congregation will get to "reap what they sow" and enjoy two homemade soups served up by the youth. This year we will be serving beef vegetable and cream of potato soups.

Please join us twice! First by helping to meet the challenge of filling and surrounding the sanctuary, and then later by breaking bread and sharing a bowl of soup.

## Silent Auction Basket Donations

The Christian Education and Mission Committees are currently in the process of making plans for the 2016 Mission Trip, which will include both youth and adults from the congregation. Part of this process includes a few different fundraisers. The first one will be a special coffee hour with cookies, punch, and a "Silent Auction" for families and friends of the church. The Silent Auction will take place on two Sundays: January 24 and 31, with pick-up of items on February 7.

At this time, the committees are requesting donations of "Theme" baskets for our Silent Auction. Use your imagination, but here are a few ideas for basket themes:

- *Gardening*
- *A Day at the Beach*
- *Family Night*
- *Night at the Spa*
- *Kid's Activity-Arts and Crafts*
- *Quilter's Dream*
- *Puzzle Mania*
- *Dessert Lover's*
- *Baker's Dream*

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**GET UP EARLY ON SUNDAY MORNINGS AND COME TO THE MEN'S GROUP. They meet at 7:30 A.M. in the boardroom next to the Pastor's Study. They're a great group of men, and there is always plenty of strong hot coffee!**

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# MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

IT'S A GREAT TIME TO GET INVOLVED IN OUR CHURCH'S MUSIC MINISTRY. From the Chancel and Bell Choirs to our Worship Team, we have a variety of ways you can serve the church and glorify God through music. Singing or ringing with us in the winter/spring months is a great way to "try out" serving through music.

- **The Chancel Choir practices on THURSDAY EVENINGS at 7:30 P.M.** and typically sings three times per month. We will soon begin preparing for Lent and Easter music. Speak with our Director of Music Ministry, Jane Livingston, if you have any questions.
- **The Bell Choir practices on TUESDAY EVENINGS at 6:30 P.M.** and rings once per month. Director Jack Salter would love to talk with you about ringing in the choir.
- **The Worship Team practices on SUNDAY MORNINGS at 7:45 A.M.** and plays each week for the 8:30 A.M. worship service. We are looking for singers and other instrumentalists. Even if you cannot make every week, you are welcome to join our team. Speak with Jane Livingston for details.
- **The Sound/AV Team welcomes men and women, age 16 and older, to join our team.** It's easier than you think, and we'll train you. Speak with Bryan Mayes for more information.

Speak with our Director of Music Ministry, Jane Livingston, if you have any questions or would like more information. We'd love to have you join us.



## THE PRAYER CHAIN

IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST, speak with Pastor Gregg, call Jennifer in the church office (814-725-8641), or email our prayer chain ([jlivingston@neo.rr.com](mailto:jlivingston@neo.rr.com) OR [jspencer@fpcne.org](mailto:jspencer@fpcne.org)). Email us if you'd like to be added to our email prayer chain.

## LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT: ANGEL TREE GIFTS

Angel Tree books are ready to be signed out. Visit the Church Library and check them out. (Coming February: Library Month)

1. *Puppy That Came for Christmas* by Megan Rix
2. *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr, Winner of the Pulitzer Prize
3. *Come Rain or Come Shine* by Jan Karon, A Mitford Series
4. *Not a Fan: Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus* by Pastor Kyle Idleman
5. *Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania* by Erik Larson
6. *Prayers That Avail Much* by Germaine Copeland
7. *Dear Sweetie, I am Okay* by Eva King
8. *Little Dear Lost* by Janet Bingham
9. *The Holy Bible* inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16) Large Print
10. *The Reindeer Wish* by Lori Evert
11. *Winter is Coming* by Tony Johnston
12. *Christmas Day in the Morning* by Pearl S. Buck



**"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](mailto:jspencer@fpcne.org), and we'll post it for you.



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# NEWS FROM THE DEACONS

**The Deacons are excited to present two new projects.**

## A WARM WELCOME TO ALL

You may have recently noticed a blue visitor/guest card in the pew racks. Each Sunday, our Deacons will be intentionally reaching out to visitors and guests to welcome and thank them for choosing to worship with our church family. We would also like to encourage all church members and friends of FPCNE to take the time to say hello and offer our visitors and guests a warm welcome. Let's make 2016 the year to get to know our church family well.

## HELPING THOSE IN NEED

The Deacons are beginning an ongoing collection project in cooperation with the *4 NINE Thrift Store* in North East to provide baskets filled with household and personal care items to individuals or families in need. Vicki Stetson, the thrift store manager, compiled a list of items for the baskets. (We also need baskets.) As baskets are filled, we will deliver them to the thrift store for distribution to individuals or families in need. Look for a collection box in the Assembly Room. Everyone is welcome to donate. We hope to continue this project as the need arises. Thank you all for having such kind hearts. Tracy Connors, Deacon President

## SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR BASKETS:

### HOUSEHOLD (LAUNDRY BASKET)

- Dish detergent
- Plastic scrubby
- Dish cloth
- Dish towel
- Laundry detergent
- Fabric softener
- Facial tissue
- Toilet paper
- Spray cleaner

### PERSONAL CARE (SMALL TOTE/BASKET)

- Soap
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Hand lotion
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Band aids
- Powder

## MISSION COMMITTEE NEWS

The Mission Committee had a very rewarding month. We decided to make a meal and have the congregation make a second meal and serve it at the Overflow Shelter of the Community Shelter Services at the Church of the Trinity in Erie. We've done this mission project previously, and we plan to do it again in the future. This experience was very fulfilling and very moving. The group that served this meal had a chance to experience the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ through service to His children. We would like to thank each of you for your efforts. In serving those in more fragile circumstances, we are putting our faith in action. There is great joy in following His call to love and care for those He loves. Let us continue to grow in our faith. If you haven't had the experience in serving a group of homeless people, please volunteer to help.

**Here are a few upcoming events from the Mission Committee:**

- **January 31 is Blanket Sunday.**
- **January 10 – February 7, we will support the North East Community Food Pantry in the annual Souper Bowl of Caring.**
- **February 7 is the Souper Bowl of Caring luncheon, a great time of fellowship and good eating on a cold February Sunday.**
- **Spring Cleanup – Details coming in the future.**

The Mission Committee is grateful and blessed to serve our congregation with faithfulness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The members of the committee are Scott Connors (Chairman), Billie Blosser, Dean Taylor, Ashley Connors, Bev Walz, Jordon Connors, Garrett Connors, Jerry Weinheimer, and Donna Banks (mission trip leader). We are always looking for new members. If you are interested please contact Scott Connors.

In God's Grace,  
Scott Connors



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# 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 17 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.)



## SERVICE SCHEDULES

| DATE        | USHERS   | NURSERY                             | READER         |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| January 3   | Dave Meehl, John Wilcox, Roger Meehl, Dianne Tyler, Evelyn Daugherty | Jerry & Nancy Weinheimer            | Steve Seymour  |
| January 10  | Bob & Sandy Nelson, Ron Blosser, Al Mohnkern, Vivian Daugherty       | Selina & Dave Uglow                 | Jessica Albney |
| January 17  | Vern & Kitty Hurlburt, Garrett Connors, Joe & Sue Spacht             | Krissy Lane & Julie Cole            | Kendell Poor   |
| January 24  | Kathy & Lynn Peterson, Barb Blount, Steve Seymour, Cole Elkin        | Paul & Barb Zorzie                  | Rodger Hazen   |
| January 31  | Jerry Weinheimer, Bob Murray, Tom Schenker, Peggy Walsh              | Heidi & Tessa Bemiss                | Brian Lash     |
| February 7  | Dave Meehl, John Wilcox, Roger Meehl, Dianne Tyler, Evelyn Daugherty | Lori Haas & Sherri Lanahan          | Deanna Ott     |
| February 14 | Bob & Sandy Nelson, Ron Blosser, Al Mohnkern, Vivian Daugherty       | Barb & Harry Blount                 | Sue Spacht     |
| February 21 | Vern & Kitty Hurlburt, Garrett Connors, Joe & Sue Spacht             | Dennis & Sandra Drab                | Dave Uglow     |
| February 28 | Kathy & Lynn Peterson, Barb Blount, Steve Seymour, Cole Elkin        | Scott DeVore, Debra & Taylor Alcorn | Fred Lucore    |



Make 2016 the year that you begin to TITHE and set aside 10% of your income to the Lord's house.

| CHURCH OFFICERS                    |                  |               |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 2016                               | 2017             | 2018          |
| SESSION                            |                  |               |
| Pauline Fisher                     | Vern Hurlburt    | Rodger Hazen  |
| Abby Johnson                       | Roy Orton        | Craig Carlson |
| Tom McClure                        | Doty Wagner      | Scott Connors |
| Marcia Regan                       | Richard Zahner   | Patti Kuna    |
| Paul Zorzie                        |                  |               |
| DEACONS                            |                  |               |
| Sue Hinman                         | Barbara Blount   | Sally Murray  |
| Tracy Connors                      | Ashley Connors   | Donna Banks   |
| Debbie Hartner                     | Becky Oyler      | Jean LaFuria  |
| Cathy McClure                      | Kathy Peterson   |               |
| Terri Andrews                      | Carol Ripley     |               |
| TRUSTEES                           |                  |               |
| Ron Blosser                        | Bob Murray       | Fred Lucore   |
| Fred Brostmeyer                    | Al Walz          | Tom Schenker  |
| Joe Spacht                         | Jerry Weinheimer |               |
| AUDITORS                           |                  |               |
| Abby Johnson                       | Yvonne Peck      | Jean Bahm     |
| PRESBYTERIAN HOMES REPRESENTATIVES |                  |               |
| Pauline Fisher and Doty Wagner     |                  |               |

