



The Exciter

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

No. 571

December 2017

THE PASTOR'S PEN

Reality is deeper and thicker and richer than you could ever have imagined. We live in a world where we are told that we must accept our limitations and “the way things are” and that there isn’t hope for change or new possibilities. God, however, speaks to us a different message. His message is a message of grace.

This Advent season we will listen to God’s message of grace as it comes to us through the voices of the angels in the birth stories about Jesus. They remind us what God began at Jesus’ birth. They point us to what shall be completed when Jesus returns. They call upon us to believe that his grace and presence are with us and at work among us even now.

“All things are possible with God.” Come to our Advent services and find God’s grace, God’s greatness, God’s salvation, and God’s joy.

Here’s the Plan:

Sunday mornings of December 3, 10, and 17 at 10:30 A.M. will be filled with heart-touching music, inspiring angelic decorations, and God’s word as it was delivered through His heavenly messengers.

Sunday afternoon, December 3 at 4:00 P.M. is our annual Advent Program and Pot-Luck Dinner. It is a joyous and laughter-filled way to usher in the season.

On Sunday morning December 24 at 10:30 A.M. the Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, and Worship Team will give us the gift of a Cantata. I’m sure you’ll leave that day with deep joy and gratefulness in your heart for all that God has done in Christ.

On Christmas Eve, December 24 at 7:30 P.M. we will have our annual candlelight service.

Also, keep an eye out for announcements at church and on Facebook about a family movie night and also regular Advent readings and thoughts from our children and members.

God bless you! Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Pastor Gregg

2017 ANNUAL FAMILY ADVENT DINNER



YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR ANNUAL ADVENT PROGRAM AND DINNER on Sunday, December 3 at 4:00 P.M. The children and youth of our church have a meaningful program themed, “Messengers of Grace: Life in an Angel-Filled World.” Following the program, plan to join your church family for dinner. If you are able, please bring a dish to share. The CE Committee will provide ham, rolls, butter, cake, drinks and place settings. The Presbyterian Women will provide cookies. Set aside this time for reflection upon the gift of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and fellowship through the Holy Spirit.



Pastor Gregg D. Townsend

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.FPCNE.ORG

CLERK'S CORNER



Greetings to all of you, my church family!! I hope that this note finds you all well as we begin this Advent season in anticipation of celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior.

Here is what has been happening around the Session table and our church!

If you were present at the Congregational meeting on November 5, you will remember that Rodger Hazen of the Nominating Committee advised the congregation that Session decided to lower the number of officers within the church. Starting in 2018 there will only be three Elders and four Deacons elected each year. This decision should not prove to be too much of a hardship as the Session and the Deacons have actually been functioning for some time with multiple vacancies. However, this may mean that we might have to change our way of thinking on how we typically “do things”! For example, an Elder may not be able to chair every committee in the church or a Deacon may have to ask for help from the congregation for funeral dinners or visitations. That being said, I am certain that we will be able to work our way through any challenges that may await us.

This year's class of Elders for a term of three years are Cindy Lilly, David Poor and Steve Seymour. This year's class of Deacons for a term of three years are Kristine Lane, Dianne Lucore and Roberta Whitmeyer. The Nominating committee is still looking for a volunteer to fill the fourth spot. Vern Hurlburt was nominated to the board of Trustees for a term of three years. The committee is currently seeking members to fill the remaining two slots.

Thank you to Rodger and the rest of the Nominating committee for all of your efforts and a job well done!

The Mission committee has its hands in many pots this holiday season! The Operation Christmas Child drive was off to a bang this year as shoe boxes full of gifts for children around the world piled up on the floor of the pulpit! Our church will be ringing the Salvation Army bell at Sander's Market on December 1 from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Eighty-seven percent of the money collected will stay in North East to help those in need. Our church will also be helping with the Community Christmas Boxes. Our goal is to provide 175 cans of cranberry sauce. If you would like to help, there is a signup sheet in the Assembly room with a variety of tasks that need done. Last year 140 families in our area benefited from your generosity!

The Worship and Music committee is gearing up for another spectacular Advent/Christmas season! Hang on to your hats for a fun-filled, heart-filled season of meaningful worship! Just imagine worshipping in a Sanctuary magically transformed in the splendor and wonder of Angels! Pastor Gregg's message each week of Advent will offer reflective and moving messages on our Advent theme, “Messengers of Grace: Life in an Angel-filled World.”

You won't want to miss any of the opportunities available to worship listed throughout the Exciter starting with the Advent Program/ Dinner on December 3 at 4:00 P.M. Join us for an evening of fellowship as we enjoy a program highlighting the talents of our youth while they lead us in singing, skits, and readings followed by a pot-luck dinner.

Worship with us on Christmas Eve morning for an angel themed Christmas Cantata, “Angels We Have Heard” featuring our Chancel choir, and also spotlighting the combined talents of the Worship Team, Bell Choir and our Youth Praise Choir. Of note is that although Jane Livingston's 25^{-year} anniversary as our organist will not take place until August of 2018, this Christmas will mark her 25th year doing the Christmas Cantata! Thank you, Jane, for your dedication and ministry!

I don't know about you, but I feel that there is no better way to usher in Christmas than by attending our candlelight service on Christmas Eve. The beauty of the sanctuary lit by candles as we celebrate our Savior's birth always leaves me breathless. Continue the celebration on Christmas morning as Pastor Gregg concludes his Angel series messages with “Angels: Servants of the Son.”

This Christmas season promises to be one of joy and exultation!

I trust that you will feel the Lord's presence in all that you do this season and feel honored to be His people!

Marcia Regan

Clerk of Session



VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.FPCNE.ORG

PLANNING AHEAD: ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

This year's Advent theme is "Messengers of Grace: Life in an Angel-Filled World." Each year at this time we are met by angels in the Gospel stories about Jesus' birth. Who and what are angels? Do they really exist? If so, how does God use them? Come each Sunday morning of Advent and discover a reality that is deeper and richer than you could have ever imagined: the reality of God's grace, God's greatness, God's salvation, and God's joy in Jesus Christ. We will also have a new Advent hymn and terrific music from our music ministry. Plus, our sanctuary will be adorned in beautiful holiday décor and perhaps something more...



- **December 3 at 10:30 A.M. – First Sunday of Advent Worship Service**
- **December 3 at 4:00 P.M. – Advent Program and Dinner**
- **December 10 at 10:30 A.M. – Second Sunday of Advent Worship Service**
- **December 17 at 10:30 A.M. – Third Sunday of Advent Worship Service**
- **December 24 at 10:30 A.M. - Christmas Cantata and Worship Service, "Angels We Have Heard," with our Chancel Choir, Worship Team, Bell Choir, and Kids' Praise participating.**
- **December 24 at 7:30 P.M. – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**
- **December 25 at 10:30 A.M. – Christmas Morning Worship Service**
- **December 31 at 10:30 A.M. – Sunday Worship Service with Readings and Carols**

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. Our church is responsible for providing about 175 cans of cranberry sauce 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 4.

IT'S PLEDGE TIME!

Have you made a financial pledge to your church? Initial pledge cards were sent recently. 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.

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."

Thank you in advance for your gift!

The Stewardship Committee

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

"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 Patti in the church office at office@fpcne.org, and we'll post it for you.



SAMARITAN'S PURSE – "OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD"



Operation Christmas Child sponsored by Samaritan's Purse was a huge success. Our church once again participated in spreading the love of Jesus and the message of love, joy and hope to so many 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 Christmas boxes to be delivered for

Christmas which we thought was an outstanding success. 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 endeavor.

PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL ADVENT PROGRAM & DINNER

Attention all those young and old, who not only enjoy the festivities of the holiday, but also reflecting upon the gift of our Lord, Jesus Christ. You are invited to join us for our Annual Holiday Advent program on Sunday, December 3rd at 4:00 P.M. The children and youth of our church have a meaningful program planned featuring, "Messengers of Grace: Life in an Angel-Filled World."

In addition, plan to join your church family for dinner. If you are able, we ask that you bring a side dish to share. The CE Committee, with the help of the Worship and Music Committee, will be creating a festive environment for all. The CE Committee will also be providing ham, rolls and butter, cake and drinks, as well as place settings. The Women's Association will be supplying cookies and treats.



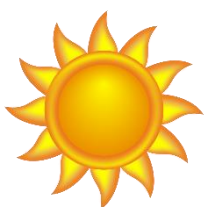
ORDER YOUR CHRISTMAS COOKIES

The Youth will once again be your bakers for the Christmas season. We are taking orders until Sunday, December 10th. You may also contact the church office to place an order. The price has been frozen at \$10.00 for a scrumptious plate of two (2) dozen cookies and goodies. Cookies will be available for pickup on Sunday, December 17.

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

Youth group members are invited to the church for baking on Saturday, December 16 from 10:00 A.M. until about 2:30 P.M.

Please see Donna Banks if you have any questions.



THINK SUMMER: PREPARING FOR OUR ANNUAL MISSION TRIP

Please mark your calendars as a reminder of the 2018 Mission Trip. We have set the dates for the week of July 8th through the 13th. Stay tuned for upcoming information on fundraising. Please see Donna Banks if you are interested in participating in fundraising or the trip itself.



PLACE YOUR ORDER FOR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

We are taking orders for red poinsettias from Luke's Greenhouse to help beautify our sanctuary for Christmas Eve. Please complete the order form below, and submit, along with your payment, to the church office by **Sunday, December 17**. 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 17** 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 17 - - - - -

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

The Presbyterian Women (PW) will not gather for their monthly Book Club in December. However, the club looks forward to reconvening on January 11, 2018 at 2:00 P.M. in the conference room. They will be discussing Beneath a Scarlet Sky by Mark Sullivan.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Send some unexpected birthday love to this month to our beloved members.

Dorothy Larson
Betty Page

December 23
December 24

If you or a loved one would like to be included, please forward the pertinent information to the church office at: 814-725-8641 or office@fpcne.org. Thank you!

SERVICE SCHEDULES

DATE	USHERS	NURSERY
December 3	Dave Meehl, John Wilcox, Roger Meehl, Dianne Tyler, Sophie Tyler	Barb and Harry Blount
December 10	Bob & Sandy Nelson, Ron Blosser, Al Mohnkern	Fred and Dianne Lucore
December 17	Vern & Kitty Hurlburt, Joe & Sue Spacht, Garrett Connors	Maddie and Debbie Hartner
December 24	Kathy & Lynn Peterson, Steve Seymour, Cole Elkin	Dave Meehl
December 31	Jerry Weinheimer, Bob Murray, Tom Schenker	Nancy Weinheimer
January 7	Dave Meehl, John Wilcox, Roger Meehl, Dianne Tyler, Sophie Tyler	Dennis and Sandy Drab
January 14	Bob & Sandy Nelson, Ron Blosser, Al Mohnkern	Selina and Dave Uglow
January 21	Vern & Kitty Hurlburt, Joe & Sue Spacht, Garrett Connors	Krissy Cole-Lane and John Luchs
January 28	Kathy & Lynn Peterson, Steve Seymour, Cole Elkin	Paul and Barb Zorzie





ADVENT 2017 at First Presbyterian Church

MESSENGERS OF GRACE: Life in an ANGEL-FILLED World

Advent and Christmas

at First Presbyterian Church of North East

Worship with us each Sunday throughout Advent. Pastor Gregg Townsend will offer thoughtful and inspiring messages on our Advent theme, "Messengers of Grace: Life in an Angel-filled World."

Sunday, December 3 at 10:30 am

ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICE

Begin your Advent journey with us on the first Sunday of Advent. We will light the first Advent candle, and Pastor Townsend will offer the message, "Angels: Messengers of Grace."

Sunday, December 3 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.

Sunday, December 10 AT 10:30 AM

ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICE

Join us for worship on the second Sunday of Advent. Pastor Townsend will offer the message, "Angels: Messengers of Greatness," and we will light the second Advent candle.

Sunday, December 17 AT 10:30 AM

ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICE

On the third Sunday of Advent, Pastor Townsend will offer the message, "Angels: Messengers of Salvation." Join us for worship as we will light the third Advent candle.

Sunday, December 24 AT 10:30 AM

CHRISTMAS CANTATA AND WORSHIP SERVICE

Share in this musical worship service on the fourth Sunday of Advent as we will light the fourth Advent candle. Our Music Ministry will offer the Cantata, "Angels We Have Heard," with our Chancel Choir, Worship Team, Bell Choir, and Kids' Praise participating.

Sunday, December 24 AT 7:30 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Join us for our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Pastor Townsend will share a special message, "Angels: Messengers of Joy," we will light the Christ candle, and our Music Ministry will fill the air with joyful music.

Monday, December 25 AT 10:30 AM

CHRISTMAS MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

Pastor Townsend will lead us in a special Christmas Day service, as he concludes his Angels series with "Angels: Servants of the Son."

Sunday, December 31 AT 10:30 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

End 2017 and usher in 2018 by joining us for a worship service filled with readings and carols.

25 West Main Street | North East PA | Phone 814-725-8641 | FPCNE.ORG | Follow us on [FACEBOOK](https://www.facebook.com/fpcne)



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