



The Exciter

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

No. 565

March 2017

THE PASTOR'S PEN



Last month I shared with you several “wishes” I have for our congregation for 2017. Beginning this month, I would like to explain each of those desires with you in a bit more detail. My hope is that our church will serve our Lord Jesus more and more faithfully by living according to God’s instruction. This month our subject is attendance in worship.

God tells us to worship with other believers every week. The fourth of the Ten Commandments says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work...For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:8-11).

God commands us to keep a Sabbath for two reasons. *First, the Sabbath is a time to rest from our work and to worship God along with the rest of God’s people.* The Sabbath gives us a break and creates a space each week for the sheer enjoyment of God’s creation and the gift of being with one another. Those who work every day endanger themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Second, the Sabbath also reorients us and reminds us of reality. From its earliest days, the Church has kept its Sabbath, not on the seventh day of the week, but on the first because Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Sabbath and in his resurrection, there is new life and a new beginning for us all. In Jesus, the future rule and reign of God has broken into our present day. Every time we gather for worship on Sunday we bear witness to his resurrection. On the Sabbath, we gather together for the preaching of God’s word and for prayer and fellowship so that we might be “reoriented” and strengthened for the week ahead so that we can follow Jesus faithfully.

It should be a very rare Sunday morning that we do not find ourselves in church singing the praises of our Lord Jesus Christ, listening carefully to the preaching of God’s Word, and praying for one another. *Here’s the reality of our situation:* For most of our members, attendance on Sunday morning is the exception and not the rule.

I invite you to reflect on Hebrews 10:24-25 which says, “Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, *not neglecting to meet together*, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” I hope that if you are a regular attender that you will also encourage and invite friends and family to attend worship with you. They’re not likely to attend unless you ask them.

God bless you. See you Sunday!

Pastor Gregg



Pastor Gregg D. Townsend

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Lent



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Begin the Lenten season with a service of reflection, and join us at 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday, March 1 for our Ash Wednesday Service. Pastor Gregg will offer a special message. The first Sunday in Lent begins on March 5. We have some special worship services focused on PRAYER planned throughout Lent.

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. We always welcome and encourage new members. Continuing our excellent music ministry means that YOU need to become involved. It really is not a huge commitment, and we have a lot of fun and laughter along the way! Come join in the fun and service.

- **The Chancel Choir practices on THURSDAY EVENINGS at 7:30 P.M.** and typically sings three times per month. We have begun preparing for Lent and Easter music. Speak with our Director of Music Ministry, Jane Livingston, if you have any questions. We welcome everyone from grades 7 and up. We finish our season in mid-June and then take a hiatus during the months of July and August.
- **The Bell Choir practices on THURSDAY EVENINGS at 6:00 P.M.** and rings about once per month. Director Jane Livingston would love to talk with you about ringing in the choir. We are still looking for more bell ringers, and now is a great time to join as we are learning new music and preparing for Lent. Youth from grade 7 and up and all adults (women and men!) are welcome. We'd love to add a few more numbers to our little group. Jane will start you out with only 1-2 bells to help you learn the ropes. We finish our season in May and then take a hiatus during the months of June through August.
- **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 for details.

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.



DON'T FORGET TO "SPRING AHEAD"

to Daylight Savings time at 2:00 A.M. on Sunday, March 12.



Pastor Gregg D. Townsend

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OUTREACH AND MISSION IN THE WORLD



NEWS FROM THE MISSION COMMITTEE

The Mission committee will be organizing two meals for the overflow homeless shelter in Erie, PA. The two meals are slated for April 5 and April 6.

For the April 5 meal, a wide variety of meat and/or vegetable casseroles will be needed, and can be frozen ahead of time. Our congregation will also be serving this meal.

For the April 6 meal, stew will be prepared at our church tentatively the day before. Volunteers are needed to cut vegetables, brown the meat, etc. Our congregation is providing this meal, although we will not be serving it.

Both meals will be served at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at 643 West 17th Street, Erie.

Sign-up sheets will appear in the Assembly Room sometime in the month of March.

This is a transformative opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus and lead by serving others.

2017 MISSION TRIP PLANS

ARE YOU BETWEEN THE AGES OF 12 AND 112? If so, you are invited to become part of our 2017 Mission Team to Philippi, West Virginia.

This year's Mission week will begin on Sunday, July 9th. Please see Donna Banks if you are being called to serve the poor.

No experience required.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN UPDATE



The Spring Gathering of Presbyterian Women will take place on April 22 at the First Church in Meadville. This year there is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the very complex issue of Middle East relationships. Gather at 9:30 A.M. with other Presbyterian Women to hear from Rev. Tim Solomon as he provides his keen insights on the dynamics of regional issues. Save the date and look for more information to follow soon.

The Presbyterian Women's Book Club will meet on Thursday, March 9 at 2 P.M. in the conference room next to the Pastor's study. The book to be discussed is *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. Join our group! We meet every second Thursday of the month.

A CELEBRATION WITH LOCAL TIES

A Christian wedding will be celebrated in Battambang, Cambodia on March 9th, for Katie Kirschner and Sat An. The couple met while serving with YWAM (Youth With A Mission) and they will continue to work with the needs of the people in that area.

Katie is the daughter of Drs. Carolyn and Greg Kirschner and has worked primarily with women and children at risk in human trafficking. Sat An is a resident of Battambang and serves with the mission to simply know God and make Him known. The population of Cambodia is made up of a large portion of young people due to wars in the past. The hope of the Christians is for an "awakening" such as that in Korea.

Congratulations to Katie and Sat on their marriage! Please keep them in your prayers as they continue to witness in our Lord's name.

~ Hazel Kirschner

ONLINE SERMONS: You can catch up on Pastor Gregg's sermon series on Mark by listening to his sermons on our church website. Visit us at FPCNE.ORG.



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MARCH BIRTHDAYS

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

Sibyl Hinman-----March 13
Lucille Hopkins---March 27

Happy Birthday!

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	READER	NURSERY
March 5	Dave Meehl, John Wilcox, Roger Meehl, Dianne Tyler, Sophie Tyler	Christy Mayes	Beth & Steve Seymour
March 12	Bob & Sandy Nelson, Ron Blosser, Al Mohnkern, Vivian Daugherty	Dean Taylor	Lisa Kelly and Marissa
March 19	Vern & Kitty Hurlburt, Joe & Sue Spacht, Garrett Connors	Bryan Lash	Bob & MaryAnn Reid-Boyd
March 26	Kathy & Lynn Peterson, Barb Blount, Steve Seymour, Cole Elkin	Kathy Taylor	Patti & Joe Kuna
April 2	Dave Meehl, John Wilcox, Roger Meehl, Dianne Tyler, Sophie Tyler	Kendell Poor	Lisa Kelly and Marissa
April 9	Bob & Sandy Nelson, Ron Blosser, Al Mohnkern, Vivian Daugherty	Deanna Ott	Tracy and Ashley Connors
April 16	Vern & Kitty Hurlburt, Joe & Sue Spacht, Garrett Connors	Cody Regan	Donna Banks and Dave Meehl
April 23	Kathy & Lynn Peterson, Barb Blount, Steve Seymour, Cole Elkin	Paul Zorzie	Deanna Ott and Becky Oyler
April 30	Jerry Weinheimer, Bob Murray, Tom Schenker, Peggy Walsh, Evelyn Daugherty	Youth	Christy Mayes and Cindy Carlson

A FEW IDEAS FOR THINGS TO DO AT FPCNE

- ❶ **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.
- ❷ **SIGN UP TO BRING FLOWERS** in honor of an occasion, in memory of a loved one, or just to praise God. **OR HOST A COFFEE HOUR.** While the Connors family and various committees help host coffee hours, anyone is welcome to host. Both charts are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.
- ❸ **SIGN UP FOR OUR "PRAYER WARRIORS" E-PRAYER CHAIN.** Simply send your email address to office@fpcne.org or jlivingston@neo.rr.com.
- ❹ **HELP THOSE IN NEED BY BRINGING IN HOUSEHOLD AND PERSONAL CARE ITEMS** for the Deacon's ongoing project in cooperation with the *4 NINE Thrift Store*. Speak with Barb Blount.

"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. Or feel free to post to our wall.

