



THE TOWER



DECEMBER 2018

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TITUSVILLE, PA

A Note from Pastor Norma Murphy

The Lord be with you all!

December has arrived and with it snow and Christmas preparations. It is one of the busiest times of the year, and it is so easy to get stressed out.

Is that what Jesus wants for us? Is that part of God's plan? Is the Spirit leading us to spend too much money, decorate too extravagantly, or party too heartily? I think not.

I believe the greatest gift we can give is that of presence – of being present with and to others all through the year, but especially now. The older I get, the more I am convinced of that. And God's greatest gift to us was and is Godself in human flesh. God was and continues to be present with and to us in a powerful and unique way.

This Advent season will be a bittersweet one for me. I will conclude my service as your Interim Pastor with worship on Christmas Eve. I will truly be sad to leave you, but trust that you will be in good hands with your new Pastor. But I will be leaving you not to go into some void while I search for another call, but to the joy of retirement. That God has timed this in such a way that I end my time with you precisely when I hoped years ago I would be able to retire is a blessing.

Know that as I take my leave on Christmas Eve, walking stick in hand, I carry you all in my heart. Be present to each other and to all those whom you love in both this season and beyond, as I have tried to be present to you. And remember that Jesus promised to be with us until the end of the age. With Christ in our lives, we can face all things.

Grace, peace, and the blessings of Christmas be with you always,

Norma

Session News

Special Congregational Meeting Votes in New Pastor

On Sunday, November 18, 2018, the Rev. Dr. Vaughan Smith preached at the worship service. At a Congregational Meeting immediately following the service, the congregation voted unanimously to call him as the next Installed Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Titusville!

We will welcome Dr. Smith as he begins his ministry with us on Monday, December 31, 2018. His first Sunday in the pulpit will be on Epiphany, January 6, 2019. More information on Dr. Smith and his family will be forthcoming in the January Tower.

All are invited to watch his candidacy sermon if you could not be with us on November 18th by going online to the church's website, www.titusvillepresbyterian.com, or by going to www.titusvillepalive.com.

Come and make the Smiths welcome on January 6, 2019!

Session Meeting Highlights

Session met to discern the following issues for the church:

October and November Highlights:

- Session Records were examined by Presbytery. Very well kept.
- Permission was given for Pastor Murphy to take vacation time from December 26, 2018 to January 3, 2019 per her contract.
- PNC Committee requested a special Session Meeting to be called on Thursday, October 25, 2018 at 6 p.m.
- Financial reports for September 2018 were examined and placed on file.
- First draft of 2019 Budget of anticipated income/expense was reviewed with questions answered.
- A recommendation to increase the monthly loan payment was made.
- Sidewalks and entry way cement work is done.
- Listing of Sunday School Teachers/volunteers were shared with Session.
- Luncheon for Girard Presbyterian Church will be held with donations to be given to the church.
- Consideration of request for money for Eryn Lavery's continuing education.
- Lisa Conner, an overseas missionary will speak on November 4, 2018 during worship.
- All week day activities are continuing to do well with good attendance.
- Stewardship Committee will be sending out stewardship letters on October 25, 2018.
- Next Presbytery Meeting will be Saturday, November 17, 2018 at 10 a.m. at the Fairview Church of the Cross.
- October Session Minutes and Special Congregational Meeting minutes were approved.
- PNC reported that they will have to meet one more time to plan Dr. Smith's Installation Service for late January.
- The 2019 Budget was passed.

- The Building and Grounds Committee plan to refresh the Pastor's Study.
- Spiritual Formation will host a movie night on December 7 at 6:30 p.m. in Scheide Hall.
- The Session approved a Spaghetti Fundraiser on January 6, 2019 to benefit youth activities.
- Heritage Committee met and are in the process of purchasing archival boxes to house the 19th century documents.
- Mission Committee reported on a successful fundraiser luncheon for the Girard PC Church. They also supported Missionary, Lisa Conner, who spoke during church service on November 4, 2018. Plans were reviewed for the upcoming 5th Friday Community Dinner to be held on Friday, November 30.
- Nominating Committee reported that they are almost done filling the slate of nominees for Session and Deacons.
- Worship Committee reported that Eryn Lavery will fill the pulpit on December 30, 2018.
- Session approved the Music Committee's upcoming special concert, "Piano and Pipes", to be held on Friday, December 14, 2018. A free-will offering was approved for the musicians.
- Session discussed the issue of flags in the sanctuary and wants to plan a process for discernment and to get congregational input before making a final decision when Dr. Smith has begun.
- Session will not meet in December. Next meeting will be Monday, January 21, 2019. Finance Committee will not meet in December. Next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 17, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Upcoming Committee Meetings

All Meetings take place in the Conference Room unless indicated otherwise.

Worship – Sunday, December 9, at 12 noon

Mission – Thursday, December 13, at 12 noon

Spiritual Formation – Thursday, December 13, at 12:30 p.m.

Deacons – Thursday, December 13, at 7 p.m.

Advent and Christmas Events

Advent “Christmas Joy” Collection

During the Advent Season, we will be collecting an offering called “Christmas Joy.” This offering will be given to the Presbyterian Church (USA) to help assist retired pastors who are finding life hard after their many years of service. An envelope can be found in your pew on Sunday, or out in the hallway on the table located near the church office. Give what you can and help with this wonderful special offering.

Advent Candle Lighting Tradition

Advent is here, and every year during this time we ask individuals, families, and groups of the church to honor us by lighting the lovely Advent wreath designed and constructed by Bill Brady. This year, we are asking different groups from our church to light the candles each Sunday.

Hanging of the Greens - Wednesday, December 12 at 4 p.m.

We will hang the greens in our Sanctuary Wednesday, December 12, beginning at 4 p.m. Come help decorate the sanctuary and stay for dinner. Donations of fresh fruit and boxes (or baskets) are needed to be able to make up baskets for our shut-ins. Please bring your donations to the church office by December 11.

Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service set for 7 p.m.

Join us at 7 p.m. on Christmas Eve for a service of Lessons and Carols, along with a traditional candle lighting service. The offering in this service will go to Associated Charities.

Childcare will be provided in the Children’s Pavilion beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Treat to be Distributed Sunday, December 16

The Lee Green Class is sponsoring the Christmas candy treat for our congregation again this year. It will be distributed on Sunday, December 16.

Anyone wishing to contribute to this project is invited to mail a check marked "Christmas Treat" to Mr. Jack Gadsby, Class Treasurer, P.O. Box 217, Titusville, PA. 16354.

Sock and Mitten Tree

Please help us fill the hat and mitten tree in the Franklin Street Entrance area. With the long wintry months upon us, please help us to keep our neighbors warm and cozy. Your donation of hats and mittens, scarves and socks will be greatly appreciated. Connie McIntyre gives them out all through the winter season through Associated Charities. Socks are appreciated year-round. We don't often think of them as a needed item to donate, but they are always a great need. Keeping feet warm and dry is important to overall health. We will add them to our Holiday Hat and Mitten Donation this year.

Sunday School News

Sunday School

- Senior High, Middle School, and Adult Sunday school classes meet at 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. If you are coming to an adult class, please feel free to bring your children as they will be welcomed to our supervised young people's area located in the nursery to wait for you before church begins.
- All children in Kindergarten through 5th grade will meet for Sunday school during the church hour. Children will come to the sanctuary with their families; stay for a short portion of worship (about the first 15 minutes); then be excused to their Sunday school classroom.

Spiritual Formation

Movie Night

On Friday, December 7, the Spiritual Formation Committee will sponsor a special viewing of the animated Christmas story movie **THE STAR**, at 6:30 p.m. in Scheide Hall.

The movie is based on the story of the nativity with a twist. When Bo a small donkey yearns for a life beyond his daily grind at the village mill, he runs off. Meeting some friends along the way, they become unlikely heroes in the greatest story ever told – the first Christmas. Popcorn will be provided.

This evening is free and for all ages. So, plan to join us and bring a friend, neighbor, children or grandchildren with you to watch this delightful story.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible study meets each Tuesday morning from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. This group will begin a three-week study on Presbyterian History and Theology.

For more information, speak with Pastor Norma; and, as always, you are invited to join this class at any time.

Transformation Tuesdays

Transformation Tuesdays, our after-school program, for children in K-5 through 5th grades, meets each Tuesday, from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Children will be escorted from Main Street Elementary to the church for snacks, Christian Education, crafts, games, and children's choir. We are always in need of volunteers; so, if you would like to help make this program a success, contact Gail Billig at 827-3122 or Jessica Decker at 827-9078.

Registration forms are available in the church office.

Note: After-school Programs follow the School Calendar.

No School – No After-School Program

Transformation Tuesdays Learns About Serving Others

During the months of October and November, the Transformation Tuesdays kiddos have been learning about serving others and collecting food for the Food Pantry at Associated Charities.

The challenge was for the congregation to bring in the total weight of all the children in pounds of food to donate. The total needed was 560 pounds. A total of 110 pounds has been collected. We will continue to collect donations until we reach 560 pounds.. Our church family is great when it comes to helping those less fortunate in in our community.

Men of First Breakfast Bible Study

MOF meets each Wednesday, at 7 a.m., in Scheide Hall. Men of the church and community come for a Bible Study, a delicious breakfast, good fellowship, and conversation on a passage of the Bible, leaving well-nourished and fulfilled.

If you would like to help prepare the morning breakfast, speak with Tom Newcombe.

This group will not meet on December 26 or January 2, but will meet on January 9,2019.

Missions

Help Associated Charities along with the College/Young Adult Fellowship

Associated Charities has asked for our help. Anyone who would be willing to help distribute gifts and food for those in need should meet at Associated Charities on Friday, December 21, at 8:30 a.m. Drivers are also needed.

If you would like to help or need more information, contact Tom Newcombe. The wage for the day is a great feeling helping those less fortunate than yourself.

Worship

The Season of Advent soon begins.....on December 2! Winter begins on December 21! The month will bring great joy as we celebrate Advent; it will also be a month which will bring changes. Let us open our hearts to those changes.

The Worship Committee will be meeting on December 9 after the Worship Hour. We will meet in Emerson Parlor.

Our next communion will be served on December 2.

Again, if anyone is interested in serving as an usher, please let me know (or Terry Davitt at the church office).

In the absence of Pastor Norma on December 30, we will have Eryn Lavery, our seminarian, in the pulpit.

On December 31, we will welcome the arrival of Rev. Vaughan M. Smith to our church and community!

Merry Christmas!

Peace.

Sandy Smith,
Moderator, Worship Committee

Ushers

Toby Cressman and Shaun Zimmerman

College / Young Adult Fellowship

College/Young Adult Ministry

Come join the College/Young Adult Ministry which meets each Sunday evening at 6 p.m., in Scheide Hall. If this is your first time attending, contact Mr. Newcombe through text/cell (814) 547-1760 or at his home 827-6295 as some of the activities will take place at different times and days throughout the week.

Our hope is to achieve an atmosphere of spiritual growth, exploration, support, and fostering and to challenge young adults to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Help Associated Charities along with the College/Young Adult Fellowship

Associated Charities has asked for our help. Anyone who would be willing to help distribute gifts and food for those in need should meet at Associated Charities on Friday, December 21, at 8:30 a.m. Drivers are also needed.

If you would like to help or need more information, contact Tom Newcombe. The wage for the day is a great feeling helping those less fortunate than yourself.

A Note from the Director of Music

Scrolling through my Facebook sometime in the early hours of the morning, I stumbled upon a shared post from one of my friends. The original author, identified as Heather Burke Cody, penned a beautiful conversation between an unnamed person and a pastor. The general idea of the discussion was that many folks were demanding the pastor address lifestyle choices, behaviors, lack of cleanliness, and other “non-stereotypical” Christian behavior they had noticed from their fellow church goers, and the pastor just didn’t know what to say. He asked the unnamed person on the other end of this conversation if they had any ideas on how he should respond to these folks... the other person suggested the following:

“Welcome to Church. This is a place of love and hope and safety and forgiveness. We will be food for the hungry. Living water for the thirsty. We are so glad you are here. You are invited. You are loved. Come on in—we’ve been waiting on you. You are welcome here. We are the church.

Say that. To the called and to the called-out. To the leaders and the greeters. To the dirty and the clean. We are all the same, we are.”

Some may say that the above response implies that the unnamed person is God. I, however, believe this could have certainly been a fellow church member, friend, or even a random person in the store. I believe God sends people to our side when we truly need them. Allow me to explain.

This church's Music Department had a busy season so far! It began with the scramble to dismantle the organ, repair and paint the chamber, then re-assemble and tune the instrument all in time for homecoming Sunday. Then there is the effort from every choir member to learn the anthems, keeping us three weeks ahead all while continuing to present meaningful music each Sunday. We also welcomed the Ladies Conference worship team for "Praise and Worship: An Uplifting Evening of Song," the first of several upcoming concerts we plan to present here at First Presbyterian. Only a week after this the Music Department came together to serve hot cider and treats to the kids on the eve of Trick or Treat. Now we are helping provide the food for the dinner to benefit Girard Presbyterian Church with hopes that all the costs will be covered before a meal is sold.

Through all of this I've found that folks consistently come forward right when needed whether it be financially, physically, or spiritually. They have been ready and willing to put their lives or finances aside and help... they make this church a place of love, hope, safety, and forgiveness. They have helped provide food for the hungry and water for the thirsty. They have given of their time, talent, and treasure without ceasing; and, for this, I am forever thankful as is every person these ministries have touched.

Now, as the Director of Music, I extend to you this call: Come.

Join this wonderful group of folks in ministry as we reach beyond the chancel to "fill the gaps" where they are found. Lend your voice to the choir or your time, talents, and treasures to one of our other projects. As the author of the post wrote: "You are invited. You are loved. Come on in—we've been waiting on you."

Nathaniel F. Licht,
Director of Music

Fellowship News

Breaking Bread Together

This group will be taking a break (no pun intended!) during the month of December. However, beginning the second Tuesday in January we will meet once again at 12:30 p.m. at Perkin's Restaurant located on Central Avenue

To participate, we ask that you call or stop by the church office by Monday, January 7, 2019, before 5 p.m. to make your reservation(s). Children, college students, and the young at heart are all invited.

SAM's (Senior Adult Ministry)

All those 55+ are invited to participate in all SAM's Club events. If you have a suggestion for a movie/event, would like to make the soup for the day, or need a ride, call Tom Newcombe at 827-3665.

SAM's Weekly Programs

Each Wednesday, join the SAM's Club group at 1 p.m. for an afternoon of needlecrafting. This group will not meet on December 26.

Each Thursday, join the SAM's Club group at 1 p.m. for an afternoon of card playing. This group will not meet on December 27.

SAM's Club Lunch and a Movie

We will meet Friday, December 7 and December 21, at 12 noon, in Scheide Hall, first for lunch and then a movie. Invite a friend and come!!

Church Mission Statement

First Presbyterian Church

A Christian community that welcomes all people and equips them to proclaim, witness, and teach the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and caring service.

Birthdays

Katie Witosky	1	Willie Stephens	13	John Schultz	24
Kelly McDonald	3	Kay Davitt	13	Stacey Root	25
Gloria Taylor	6	Phil Atteberry	17	Casey Root	25
Mary Gaiser	7	Monica Chatham	17	Patricia Fitz	26
Carol Hughes	7	Derek Rapp	17	Bob Davitt	28
Pennie Winkler	9	Amanda Jackson	17	Vickey Hauptman	29
Judy Maseman	9	Nancy Clark	18	Lisa Repasky	31
Nancy Funk	10	B. J. Root	19	Tara Nichols	31
Rochelle Cressman	11	John Clark	22		

If we have missed your birthday – please let us know.

Flowers for the Sanctuary

If you would like to place flowers in the Sanctuary on any Sunday throughout the year, let Terry Davitt know at the church office (827-3665) by the Wednesday prior to them being in the sanctuary. This way, she can place the dedication in the bulletin.

Community

Alzheimer Caregiver's Support Group Meeting

An Alzheimer Caregiver's Support Group, led by Marcia Garrett and Carol Morgan, will meet only on December 4 at 2:30 p.m. in Emerson Parlor in the month of December

A difficult challenge to face alone, Marcia and Carol have participated in special training to equip them to lead the group. All those who live with or care for those afflicted with Alzheimer's or dementia of any kind are welcome to participate. If you have questions, call Marcia Garrett at 827-7404.

Boy Scout Troop

Boy Scout Troop #97 meets each Monday at 6 p.m. in Scheide Hall.

All boys in grades Kindergarten -through 5th grade, if interested in joining a great club for boys, are invited to come and check it out. Any questions should be directed to Geri Whitney at (814)564-1179.

Food Pantry

The Food Pantry needs our help. It is always collecting food items for its shelves. Gift cards (for personal hygiene items and toiletries) are always appreciated too.

Arts and Scraps Space

Are you crafty? Do you like to share and fellowship with other ladies over arts and crafts? Do you have a project that you need to spread out to complete? Are you a scrapbooker? Are you limited on space and time? Are you interested in organizing your photos or creating a keepsake? Do you have scrapbook supplies collecting dust? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then Jessica Decker has just the thing...The Arts and Scraps Space, right here at First Presbyterian. Jessica is using an underutilized classroom in the upstairs for her crafting and scrapbooking supplies. Jessica is at the church a few days during the week to work on her various crafts and tasks and loves company! So, come to “The Lair,” as she jokingly calls it, and check it out! You will find the space warm and welcoming.

The Arts and Scrap Space is located on the second floor between the “Worship Center” and the “Prayer Room.”

Please call Jessica at 814-827-9078 (home) or 814-449-4681 (cell) or text her at 449-4681 or e-mail her @ jessicadecker73@icloud.com.

Crisis Hotlines

Drug and Alcohol Crisis Line: (844)643-5766

Case manager available 24/7 to assist in seeking treatment and to get screenings/assessments and appointments made

Mental Health Crisis Line: (814) 724-2732 or (800) 315-5721

To access help in case of an emergency

Warm Line: (800)951-2055

When you need someone to talk to on a bad day.

Contact Us

First Presbyterian Church

216 North Franklin Street, Titusville, PA 16354

(814) 827-3665

Email: firstpresby216@verizon.net

Website: titusvillepresbyterian.com

Staff

Kai Baldwin, Accompanist

Vickie Corey, Housekeeper

Terry Davitt, Administrative Assistant

Email: tdavitt.presby@gmail.com

Kelly Evans, Sexton

Laura Grazier, Nursery Attendant

Nathaniel Licht, Director of Music

Email: mistalicht@gmail.com

Rev. Norma Prina Murphy, Interim Pastor

Email: prnorma93@gmail.com

Tom Newcombe, Sr. Adult Ministry Leader

Email: newcombe.presby@gmail.com

Piano Pipes

A Christmas Concert

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14TH
7:00 PM

Featuring:

GEORGE WILBUR
NATHANIEL LICHT
CHASE UPCHURCH

and

JOE THOMPSON

Free Admission!

Titusville First Presbyterian Church
216 North Franklin Street, Titusville