



# THE PROCLAIMER

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 2023

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC) – MONONGAHELA, PA

Editor—Barbara Henderson

## Message From Your Pastor:

Hello Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The holidays are around the corner! Can you smell the turkey roasting in the oven, the pumpkin pies cooling on the counter, the spices of parsley, sage and poultry seasoning from the dressing? The dreaming of those aromas reminds us that Thanksgiving is on its way. The Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, football games, and that nap after dinner (the turkey isn't the only thing that got stuffed) are all apart of the celebration of Thanksgiving.

But let us not forget that the first Thanksgiving was the coming together of the 90 Native American Wampanoag people and 53 Pilgrims, the survivors of the Mayflower. The Pilgrims and the Native Americans who sat down together shared a thanksgiving feast for their first harvest and survival of the bitter winter.

We also have so much to celebrate—our freedom to worship our own faith and to live where and how we choose. Yes, we have had a rough year of political divisiveness, violence in our streets, and hurricanes, fires, and other tragedies. But God has been good to us. So let's celebrate!

Thanksgiving also means that it's time to start thinking about Christmas. Advent begins Sunday, December 3rd. As we string the lights on the tree, remember that Jesus is "The Light of the World." As we bake those cut-out cookies and nut breads, remember that Jesus is the "Bread of Life." As we make out our shopping lists, don't forget the wise men and their gifts to the Christ Child of "Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh." And most importantly, as we bring out the creche, let us rejoice that the angels proclaimed to the shepherds, **"Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."** (Luke 2:10-12, KJV)

Praise the Lord!!! Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas,

Pastor Janet





## ELDER'S PRAYER

Our Father in Heaven,

Thank you for all our material blessings, family and friends. We thank you for Your amazing power and work in our lives.

We thank you for Your goodness, great love, mercy and grace. Help us to remember You are always with us.

Most of all, we thank you for Jesus, who gave His life for the forgiveness of our sins and the promise of eternal life.

As we go through the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, renew our spirit, filling us with Your peace and joy.

We give all praise and thanks to You.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Elder Dale Minjock



### Community Thanksgiving Service

On Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 7:00 PM, First United Methodist Church along with the Monongahela Ministerium will host a community Thanksgiving service. Let's us come together and give thanks for all the blessings our Lord has given to each of us.



## THE PROCLAIMER

Don't forget to turn your clocks back at 2:00 AM,  
Sunday, November 5, 2023.



## Congregational Meeting



On November, 19, 2023, immediately following the morning worship service, the yearly congregational meeting will be held. This is the meeting that the congregation will vote for church officers and approve the proposed budget for 2024. Please make it a point to attend this very important meeting as we continue the life of the church.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### NOVEMBER

- 1 All Saint's Day
- 5 Daylight Saving Time begins
- 9 Praise & Worship
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 13 Board Meeting
- 15 Elders Meeting
- 16 Tri-County Men's Fellowship—FCC Monongahela
- 19 Congregational Meeting
- 21 Monongahela Ministerium Thanksgiving Service, 7:00 PM—First United Methodist Church
- 23 Thanksgiving Day

### DECEMBER

- 3 First Sunday in Advent
- 10 Second Sunday in Advent
- 17 Third Sunday in Advent
- 24 Fourth Sunday in Advent
- 24 Christmas Eve Service—7:00 PM
- 25 Christmas Day
- 31 New Year's Eve

## **2024 CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **Elders (4 Year Term)**

**2024-2027**

Barbara Henderson

### **Deacons (3 Year Term)**

**2024-2027**

Domenick Fogiato

Donna Hochendonner

Paul Hochendonner

Audrey Minjock

Kay Norris

Sandy Wentzell

### **Junior Deacon (1 Year Term)**

### **Trustees (3 Year Term)**

**2024-2026**

### **Church Officers (1 Year Term)**

Treasurer	Nikki Mazza-Fredley (yr. 3)
Assistant Treasurer	Patty Miller (yr. 1)
Financial Secretary	Audrey Minjock (yr. 1)
Asst. Financial Secretary	Joe Mancinelli (yr. 3)
Church Clerk	Audrey Minjock
Historian	Audrey Minjock

## **2024 Proposed Budget**

Pastor	\$ 57,000.00
Administration	22,200.00
Property	48,280.00
Evang & Membership	2,200.00
Worship	2,025.00
Stew/Finance	4,625.00
Christian Education	1,950.00
World Outreach	<u>17,800.00</u>
Total Annual Budget	\$156,080.00

Increase of 5.71% from 2023





## Blessings

As I sit here writing this newsletter article, I'm bombarded with reminders of the upcoming Christmas holiday. Christmas toy catalogs fill my mailbox, the Hallmark Channel is showing Christmas movies, and Hobby Lobby boasts 50% off on all Christmas merchandise. And yet, Halloween is still a week away. Time seems to be going by too quickly for this senior citizen.

But wait! What happened to Thanksgiving? One might be able to find a few turkeys or cornucopias on the empty store shelves amidst leftover Halloween decorations. It's not that I don't love Christmas. It's just that I enjoy Thanksgiving and the idea of setting aside time to reflect on my blessings.

When I taught kindergarten and first grade, I looked forward to making paper turkeys with colorful construction paper feathers on which the children would list the things for which they were thankful. The genuine honesty of their responses was so refreshing - unlike those of older children or adults - the usual family, food, friends... Honestly, I fit into that latter group. When thanking God for my blessings I often lump my thanks into such categories. (I'm embarrassed to say that it's very time effective.) And yet the song, "Count Your Blessings," resonates in my mind. How can this senior even begin to count her blessings and "name them one by one"?

It's just that I have been so blessed in my lifetime - not that there haven't been any "potholes" along life's road. I have been blessed because I grew up knowing the Lord and have been able to share my faith with a loving church family who supports me when the road gets more than a little bumpy.

The folks who join us on Monday nights may not have experienced that blessing in their lives. As I have said before, it has been such a blessing to have formed relationships with those who enter our door on those evenings. We may only be there to provide a "free" meal to some and that's okay. Hopefully though, those who enter will feel God's love shining through us.



## THE PROCLAIMER

### The Meaning of Advent

During advent, which begins this year on December 3, many churches and family use wreaths to symbolize watchfulness and increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Colors for the candles vary, with some traditions using blue (for hope and creation) and others preferring purple (for royalty, humility and penitence.)

The four candles each represent a week in Advent also signify hope, peace, joy and love. (The third candle is often pink.) In the center is the white Christ candle, representing Jesus as the light of the world. That candle is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The round, green Advent wreath has special meaning of its own. It symbolizes eternal life and the unending love of God, who sent His only son to earth to die in our place.



## GIVING TREE

### Sock and Mitten Tree

Beginning Sunday, November 12, 2023 through Sunday, December 3, 2023, we will again have the Sock and Mitten Tree. These donations are collected and given to children who have experienced abuse or neglect. Gifts are needed for children and teens, ages birth to 18 years old. Let's again help children and teens of Washington County have a wonderful holiday that they deserve.





### Small packages, great things

The motto for Hershey's Kisses used to be "Big things come in small packages!" That also could be a motto for Bethlehem, for Baby Jesus and, indeed, for us. It's an important message to remember when we fear we're too weak to fix the world's problems, too small to fight the gigantic terror that threatens a loved one or too lacking in abilities we see in others.



"But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah," God declares through the prophet Micah (5:2, NRSV), "from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel." Bethlehem was a mere village. God's ruler for Israel started as an infant. His birthplace was a small stable, not a palace or temple. But size isn't everything. Big — that is, great — things can come in small packages. And thanks to the tiny baby who grew up to share immeasurably huge love with the world, God can do great things through you, too!



The message of the poem "What can I give Him" by Christina Rossetti is that the speaker is unable to offer anything of material value to Jesus. The poem suggests that if the speaker were a shepherd, they would bring a lamb, and if they were a Wise Man, they would do their part. However, since they are neither, they can only give their heart<sup>1</sup>. The poem is often interpreted as a call to give oneself to God and to live a life of faith and devotion<sup>2</sup>.

What can I give Him poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.  
Yet what can I give Him? Give Him my heart.



Poetry Founda-  
tion.org





## Celebrate the Light

Bursting through December nights  
that could be long and cold,  
our Christmas lights bring warmth and joy  
with colors soft or bold.

Cascading from the rooftops,  
and from trees both small and tall,  
the lights cry out, "We have good news!  
We want to shout to all.

"You've seen the darkness earth can hold,  
the sorrow, war and fear;  
but God has sent his Son for all,  
to show his Love is here.

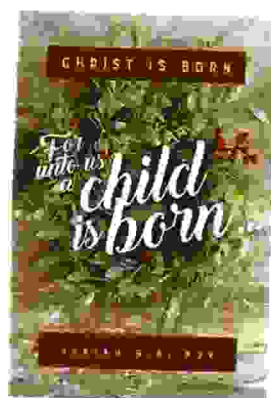
"The darkness can't put out God's Light.  
Christ's with us day by day,  
illuminating paths so we  
can follow in his way."

Light homes and streets and candles.  
Make your world shine clear and bright.  
God's love surrounds and blesses us.  
Come, celebrate God's Light!

—Peggy Ferrell







## The Meaning of the Candy Cane

### Hard Candy

Reminds us that Jesus is like a "rock," strong and dependable.  
(Read Psalm 31:3.)

### Peppermint Flavor

Reminds us of the gift of spices from the wise men.  
(Read Matthew 2:11.)

### White Candy

Stands for Jesus as the holy, sinless Son of God.  
(Read 1 John 1:7.)

### Cane Shape

Is like a staff used by shepherds in caring for sheep.  
Reminds us of Jesus, our "Good Shepherd"  
(Read John 10:1-18, 27-30.)

### The Letter "J"

Is the first letter in the Name of Jesus, our Savior.  
(Read Matthew 1:21.)

### The Color Red

Reminds us that Jesus is the Gift of God's love,  
Reminds us that Jesus shed His blood for us.  
(Read John 3:16 and Revelation 1:5.)

### The Stripes

The large stripe reminds us of the cross on which Jesus died.  
Three small red stripes remind us of His sufferings from  
the whip on His back, the crown of thorns on his head,  
and the nail wounds in His hands and feet.  
(Read John 19:1-30.)



## THE PROCLAIMER



### NOVEMBER

5 Kay Norris  
6 Karen Wilson  
8 Cordelia Soles  
9 Marci Mazza-Fredley  
11 Art Mace  
25 Holly Lealiki  
27 Sherri Fogiato  
30 Falyn Cialone

### DECEMBER

9 Louise Stoneman  
11 George Lyons  
12 Wesley Hyslop  
23 Kathy Petrosky  
30 Faye Ireys  
30 Barbara Karnack

*Happy*  
**ANNIVERSARY**

### NOVEMBER

### DECEMBER

17 Tom & Grace Kahl



## THE PROCLAIMER

So, when counting my blessings I continue to include you, my church family, for your love and support of this outreach mission—for the money that you donate, for the cakes that you bake, for your assistance preparing meals or serving them, and even for helping clean up.

May the Lord bless you as I have been blessed.—Audrey  
Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 102 meals distributed

In 1Thessalonians 5:18, the scripture states, "Give thanks in all things. For this is the will of God toward you in Christ Jesus." Wherever you are in your faith journey, remember to give thanks to God.

### Give Him Thanks

And in all things, give Him thanks,  
And in all things, let your gratitude shine through.  
And in all things, give Him thanks,  
For He has given all things unto you.

### Thanksgiving Humor

Need to lighten the mood at your holiday dinner table? Share some laughter with these Thanksgiving-themed jokes.

Why did the turkey decline dessert?  
Because it was stuffed.

Why did the turkey cross the road twice?  
To prove he wasn't a chicken.

What smells the best at Thanksgiving dinner?  
Your nose.

Why didn't the chef season the turkey?  
There wasn't enough thyme.

Why did the turkey leave the band?  
People were fighting over the drumsticks.





## THE PROCLAIMER

### A Stanza for Veterans Day

As we remember America's veterans on November 11, we would do well to read again the third stanza of Katherine Lee Bates' America the Beautiful:

O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife,  
Who more than self  
Their country loved,  
And mercy more than life!  
America! America!  
May God thy gold refine,  
Till all success be nobleness,  
And every gain divine!



Our church family sends condolences to the families of:  
Robert "Bob" Ireby who passed on October 12, 2023 and  
Virginia "Ruth" Richardson who passed on October 24, 2023.

Holly Stidard Lealiki who passed on October 24, 2023  
Our thoughts and prayers are with the families during their time of loss.