



What's Happening at Bluffton Presbyterian Church

December 2018

Growing in Faith • Sharing God's Love

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 2 – 1st Sunday of Advent / Communion / 3 Cents a Meal Offering

Special Music: Julia Szabo & Don Brauen
Sound: Jay McCracken / Slides: Julia Szabo
Liturgist: Beth Buist
Greeters: Owen and Kay Ziessler
Acolytes: Owen and Clara Brauen

Sunday, December 9 – 2nd Sunday of Advent / Children and Youth Service - "Glories Stream"

Special Music: Youth Program & Choir
Sound: Bob Hursh / Slides: Diane Winebar
Liturgist: Children and Youth
Greeters: Children and Youth
Acolyte: Owen Brauen

Sunday, December 16 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Special Music: Don Brauen and Praise Team
Sound: Mike Rhonemus / Slides: Leslie Freed
Liturgist: Diane Winebar
Greeters: and J. Warren
Acolytes: McVetta Girls

Sunday, December 23 – 4th Sunday of Advent

Special Music: Choir
Sound: Jeff Gillen / Slides: Cathy Carroll
Liturgist: Jay McCracken
Greeters: Don and Cathy Carroll
Acolytes: Owen and Clara Brauen

Sunday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Service

Special Music: BPC Quintet Prelude
Sound: Jay McCracken / Slides: Julia Szabo
Liturgist: Tenna Rhonemus
Greeters: Tyler/Laura From and Tom/Rebecca Hursey
Acolytes: McVetta Girls

Sunday, December 30

Sound: Clair Winebar / Slides: Diane Winebar
Liturgist: Phill Talavinia
Greeters: Dusty and Leslie Freed
Acolyte: Avery Talavinia

Mark Your Calendars!

- December 2 – Congregational Meeting – Following Worship
- December 2 – Children/Youth Rehearsal – 3:30 to 5:00 PM
- December 2 – Youth Group – 5:00 to 7:00 PM
- December 4 – Pastor Karol leads MMH Worship 6:30
- December 9 – Fellowship Sponsored by Youth – Following Worship
- December 9 – Youth Group Gift Wrapping – Following Worship
- December 12 – Pastor Relations Committee 5:30
- December 12 – Praise Team 7:30
- December 13 – Joint Deacon and Session Meeting – 7:00 PM
- December 16 – Ignite Group Christmas Caroling – Meet at Mennonite Home – 2:00 PM. Fellowship at the home Jim and Carole following
- December 21 – Young Adult Gathering 6:00 – Manse
- December 23 – Newsletter Items Deadline CEGillen@MarathonPetroleum.com
- December 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion
6:30 PM – BPC Quintet Prelude
7:00 PM – Candlelight Service
- January 6 – Annual Reports Due to Cathy Carroll
- January 13 – Ordination/Installation of Officers

WORSHIP SCHEDULE CONTINUED

Sunday, January 6 – Communion / 3 Cents a Meal Offering

Sound: Jay McCracken / Slides: Julia Szabo



Pastor's Letter

Advent is going to look and sound a bit different this year! Our worship will be centered around the theme of Calm and Bright. 2018 marks the 200th anniversary of the debut of "Silent Night, Holy Night." This hymn sung on Christmas Eve has become the best-loved worship moment of many Christians.

Something mystical occurs as we light our candles and sing the hope of "all is calm, all is bright" – peace and light for the world. This season, we will celebrate the carol's message throughout the entire season of Advent and highlight its call for our lives that can guide us all year long.

In the music and liturgy each Sunday, listen for the phrase "We need a silent night," and ask yourself what it is that we need—what it is that we seek—in the season of Advent and Christmas.

The gift God gives at Christmas is available for us all. That gift calls us to follow Jesus beyond the manger, into the streets and homes of our neighbors, all the way to the suffering of the cross and the glory of the resurrection.

The noise of the world around us – consumerism, especially in this holiday season, tries to drown out the sacred. In the midst of the violence and chaos and hatred that seem to thrive, let us remind ourselves of God's powerful gift of the Christ-child, born for us all on that timeless Silent Night.

In Christ,

Pastor Karol

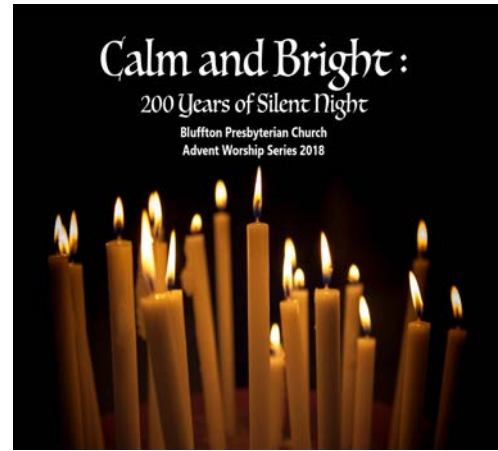
Small Groups

The Claralice Circle meets every Tuesday evening from 6:30 to 8:30 PM in the BPC Fellowship Hall.

The Sister Min Circle will meet November 9 and November 30 from 2:00 to 3:00 PM at Maple Crest.

Choir

The choir rehearses on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM in the sanctuary. New members are welcome!



Christmas Joy Offering

For more than 80 years, Presbyterians have given generously at Christmas to lift up those who have devoted their lives to the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Throughout Advent, churches throughout the denomination will again receive this special offering. The Christmas Joy Offering is shared equally by the [Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions](#), which provides much-needed assistance to PC (USA) church workers and their families, and [Presbyterian-affiliated racial ethnic schools and colleges](#), which enable students to develop their gifts and find their calling. We will collect this offering throughout the month of December.

In Memory of a Loved One!!

If you would like to give a gift in memory of a loved one for the Advent and Christmas seasons, the Worship Committee requests that you use the form included in the newsletter or church bulletin to make a monetary donation.

Please place your completed form (with cash or check) in the offering plate or send to the church (P.O. Box 149, Bluffton) by **December 18**. Thank you!

Tables for Sale

Session has ordered new lighter-weight 8-foot tables for the fellowship hall. Because of limited storage space, **11 brown metal 8-foot tables** need a new home! If you would like to purchase some, please contact Lynda Best. Suggested price: \$30/table.

BPC Quintet

The BPC Quintet will play prelude music at 6:30 PM at the Christmas Eve Service on December 24.



Per Capita

You are invited to help cover the per capita cost of your membership by making a special donation through our congregation as part of your discipline of stewardship. The per capita amount is \$33.20 per member in 2019. Thank You!



Adopt a Family

This year we have adopted two families through the Bluffton Community Assistance program. Poster boards with requested donations can be found in the back of the sanctuary. Please return all items by **December 9**. Following the fellowship time that day, the youth will sort the donations and wrap any gifts. Anyone who would like to help is welcome to join us!

Highlights of November' Session Meeting

- Approved electrical easement request (from Village of Bluffton) to install power box on the alley side near the rear of the church. Agreed to hold Chicken BBQ on November 24 during lighting of "Blaze of Lights" with proceeds designated for Tyler and Laura From for a newer accessible van. Approved to receive Ben Miracle as a member by Reaffirmation of Faith – plan to recognize during November 11 worship. Approved request to place Brandie Wagner and Chad Carroll on "other" list since both are now attending other churches.
- Sink faucet in basement at manse has been replaced. The replacement for the shower base did not fit, therefore area is being sealed with "flex seal".
- Custodian Tony Carmack is completing 30 years of service to the church – approved giving \$50 gift to Tony.
- In October Pastor Karol made 2 home/hospital/nursing home visits, had 5 conversations, and sent 11 sent. Congregational activities: Word in the World discussion group (weekly), Claralice Circle (weekly), led Sunday LIFT, Nursery Care Givers Annual Review, and committee meetings. Presbytery activities: Worship Planning Team and High School Retreat Planning Meeting. Community Engagement: Pastors' Appreciation Dinner at Maple Crest and Hospice Meeting at St. Rita's. Approved Pastor Karol's request for following vacation dates: December 25-31 including Sunday, December 30 and February 7-10 including Sunday, February 9.
- Approved calling Congregational Meeting for Sunday, December 2 following worship for the purpose of electing Elders, Deacons, and 2019 Nominating Committee.



Deacons Report

All of our current college students will be receiving gift boxes from the Deacons just in time for finals week. The boxes were filled with snacks for late night studying, an inspirational message, and school supplies to help keep them armed and at the ready for those last few days before winter break.

A \$300 donation was given to the Bluffton Food Panty to help with upcoming holiday needs. Also, a \$300 donation was given to Tyler and Laura From to help with the future purchase of a newer van.

“Be willing to help and care for each other because of Christ. By doing this, you honor Christ.” Ephesians 5:21



The Deacons are searching for volunteers to help transport members to church who are

unable to drive themselves. They may need some assistance when entering certain vehicles. Your participation in this program will continue to allow us all to worship the Lord together as a family. If you're interested in helping, please contact Pastor Karol or any Deacon.



Little Free Pantry

We are in need of supplies for the **Little Free Pantry**. Items you may consider donating: boxed food, (cereal, etc.), dry mixes, rice, noodles, peanut butter, personal hygiene items, paper towels, Kleenex, baby items. Please drop off directly in the pantry or in the church office. Please do not put canned foods in the pantry during the cold winter months.

Mission Committee

We tied four fleece blankets at Maple Crest on November 10 for Family Promise and Adopt-a-Family. If you would still like to make some blankets, we would appreciate it and will be accepting them until December 9. There is some fleece in the back of the church, but also feel free to buy your own.

We helped with set up for the Blaze of Lights and fed workers with donations from church members.

Please remember to bring food for the food pantry the second Sunday in December. The items needed this month are **soup and cereal**. This is not to say that we don't welcome other items, but these are the items they need the most at this time.

Tree of Remembrance Memorial Service

The holiday season is normally a time of joy, but when someone you love has died, it can be a time of loneliness and pain. To help ease the pain and provide some comfort, Chiles-Laman Funeral & Cremation Services is offering a *Tree of Remembrance Memorial Service* on Sunday, December 9 at the Centre in Bluffton, 601 N. Main Street.

All families in attendance will receive a free glass ornament personalized with the name and dates of their loved one that will be placed on the Christmas tree. Families may begin arriving at 1:00 PM followed by a brief memorial service at 2:00 PM. At the conclusion of the service, the ornament is yours to take home. The tree of Remembrance Memorial Service is a gift to the community so there is no charge to attend; however, reservations are requested. To make a reservation or for more information, call 419-358-2051 or email chilesbl@wcoil.com. All families are welcome.

Youth Ski Trip

Christ Presbyterian Church in Toledo is inviting all high school students of Maumee Valley Presbytery on their annual ski trip, taking place on the afternoon of **Sunday, January 20** at Mad River Mountain. Please contact Pastor Karol by January 2 for more information or to RSVP.



- Thanksgiving is a time to be thankful and the start to a season of giving. We warmed the hearts of our neighbors with a smile and their palates with some free hot cocoa at the Blaze of Lights.
- Ignite members participated in the Blaze of Lights Chicken BBQ headed up by Lynda Best.
- Holiday Caroling & Friends
Church members and friends are invited to share some holiday spirit on Sunday, December 16. Meet at the Mennonite Home at 2:00 PM to carol to our church members and others, then we will visit several homes. Contact Carole Enneking if you plan to join the caroling OR if you have a suggestion for someone who would like a musical visit! Carolers are invited to stop at the Enneking's (303 Campus Drive) following the home visits and enjoy fellowship and refreshments (around 4:00 PM).
- Faith and Family Night with the Walleyes –
Ignite and the Youth Group would like to invite everyone to a Faith and Family event on Sunday, February 10. This event is hosted by the Toledo Walleyes. For the event The Walleyes are looking to incorporate a live band for a pregame concert, as well as a brief discussion with the team Chaplain and a couple Walleye players about their faith and experiences throughout professional athletics. The event will last an hour, followed by the Walleye game. Tickets are \$17/person and include entry to Faith and Family Night and the Walleye game.



Youth Group

The Youth Group will meet on Sunday, December 2 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM for our monthly meeting. We will continue our discussion on discipleship and have some special Christmas games. Each family is encouraged to bring some bread to share for the meal.

Sunday LIFT

The Sunday LIFT group will be focusing on the advent journey with some great action words! Join us Sunday mornings from 9:00 to 10:00 AM in the Basement Fellowship Hall. All ages are welcome to join us for Bible study, play, worship, and a light breakfast. Our December sessions are listed below:

Advent

Session 1 Watch! Matthew 24:36-44

*Session 2 Prepare! Matthew 3:1-12

Session 3 Recognize! Matthew 11:2-11

Session 4 Receive! Matthew 1:18-25

*The Sunday LIFT group will not meet on Sunday, December 9 so that the children and youth can have a final run through for the worship service that day.

The Sunday LIFT group will not meet on Sunday, December 30. Please join us January 6, 2019. A great adventure awaits us in the new year...

Adventure Awaits

Session 1 Asia Anew Matthew 2:1-12

Session 2 Ancient Egyptians Matthew 2:13-23

Session 3 Off We Go into the Wild Blue Yonder
Matthew 4:12-23

Session 4 Climb the Mountain Luke 9:28-36

Young Adult Gathering

On Friday, December 21, Pastor Karol will host a gathering for young adults (college through early 30s). They will gather at the manse at 6:00 PM for food and fellowship, then go bowling at Southgate Lanes at 7:30. This will be a great opportunity for our younger crowd to reconnect over the holidays. RSVP to 419-581-9232 by Wednesday, December 19.

Adult Sunday School

The Adult Sunday School Class will begin a new lecture series on December 2 by John Dominic Crossan and is based on his book, "How to Read the Bible & Still Be a Christian." Crossan is described as "one of the world's foremost historical Jesus scholars." The title of the series is "Violence Divine" and the program notes claim the series "... helps the church and its alumni/ae rise above the greatest of Christian treasons; that everlasting peace can only be achieved through the onslaught of divine violence."

The session titles are:

An Epic Matrix, Sin and Escalatory Violence,
The Heart of the Torah, Deuteronomy Rules,
Undecided Justice, Not, not, not, not, not, NOT the
End of the World, The 'Violentization' of Jesus,
and Overcoming the Bible's Betrayal of its Non-Violent God.

The adult class meets each Sunday from 9:00 to 10:00 AM in the first classroom of the education wing.

There will be no Adult Sunday school class on Sunday, December 30, but we will resume on Sunday, January 6.

Children's Advent Offering

As we enter the season of Advent, the children of the church are invited to bring money for an offering when they come forward for the Time for Young Christians. They will place the money in the jar by the piano, which holds money that the children have collected in the past.

Around the beginning of the year, the children will help decide what they would like to do with the collection. Then we can reassess to see if the collection will be continued or set aside for a season.

Contact Pastor Karol or Tenna Rhonemus if you have any questions or other ideas about this project. This is just one way we can help teach our children the importance of giving to others!

Advent Children and Youth Service

Join us on December 9 for an Advent Service lead by the children and youth. As we continue our worship series "Calm and Bright". They will present the skit, "Glories Stream", as the sermon.

The cast of characters include:

Joy – Clara Brauen
Faith – Libby McVetta
Amaze – Robbie McGarrity
Hope – Brennan Leugers
Wonder – Bexley Leugers
Care – Morgan McVetta
Courage – Jacob Szabo
Awe – Owen Brauen
Peace – Avery Talavinia
Proclaim – Paige McVetta
Believe – Faith Combs

Come see how this group of angels proclaimed "Glories Stream" on a very special night many, many years ago and how we can let "Glories Stream" today!

The rehearsals for this service will be on the following dates and times:

Sunday, December 2 from 3:30-5:00 PM

Saturday, December 8 from 9:00-10:30 AM



Advent Mission Projects

In our 2018 "Calm and Bright" Advent Worship Series, each week offers an opportunity to bring forward gifts representing mission projects from the congregation.

Here are the items that will be featured each week:

December 2: Tied Fleece Blankets

December 9: Adopt-a-Family Christmas Gifts

December 16: Cards/Meals for Unassuming Healers

December 23: Little Free Pantry Winter Items

December 24: Christmas Joy Offering

The faith journey of former Bluffton football player Alex McClelland to be shared during community event

BLUFFTON, Ohio – The family of Alex McClelland will share “Reaching Out: A Young Man’s Story of Faith, Courage and Commitment” on Wednesday, Dec. 5 at Bluffton University. The presentation will take place twice, from 4-5:30 p.m. and 7-8:30 p.m. in Yoder Recital Hall.

Alex was a student at Bluffton University and a member of the Beaver football team during the 2007-08 season when he experienced pain on his sacrum bone. The pain increased with time, and in April of 2008 he was diagnosed with osteosarcoma. He died from cancer in the summer of 2009.

As a child, Alex was introduced to his faith by his family; he learned Bible stories and went to Sunday school. As he grew older, he spent less time nurturing his relationship with God. However, the diagnosis set him on an inspiring and incredible faith journey.

“Alex tried to pray, but discovered that it felt empty. Without a relationship with God, prayer was simply ‘words’ without feeling,” explained members of Alex’s family. “He could not connect to the Almighty being to whom he was praying. Through encouragement, Alex’s persistence to rediscover God and God’s unconditional love, Alex experienced a miracle that set him on a journey that has helped to teach countless young adults to understand that God can change their life. They simply have to reach out believing that the Lord will reach back.”

Former football coach for Bluffton, Greg Brooks, will also share about Alex’s impact on campus and beyond. Brooks is an area representative for Fellowship of Christian Athletes in North Carolina. Alex’s family says the event will help attendees “learn how their own faith journey can be transformed.”

This event, sponsored by Bluffton University Campus Ministries, is free and open to the public. **For more information: Tricia Bell, 419-358-3285 or (cell) 419-371-0464, bellt@bluffton.edu**



Thank you to the Bluffton Community Preschool families for their recent canned food drive to help restock our Little Free Food Pantry!

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your generous contribution of \$210 to the Allen County Abilities Field of Dreams. We truly appreciate your support. We had our ribbon cueing on October 12, which was a truly memorable night. There is still work to be done before our opening day in the spring but we are off to a great start.

We have a Facebook page, Allen County Abilities Baseball League. Please “like” our page and stay updated on progress of the field and the league.

Sincerely,
Rachael Staley
Abilities League Coordinator

Weekday Christian Education Release Time Walkers

Here are the upcoming dates and times for Christian Education Walkers. If you are available to help please sign up on the sheets in the back of the sanctuary or contact Tenna Rhonemus. Thank you!

Thursday December 20 Grades 1-5
8:50- 9:20
9:25- 9:55
12:25- 12:55
1:00- 1:30
1:45- 2:15
2:25- 2:55



Prayer Requests

Prayers of Sympathy with Owen and Kay Ziessler and family on the recent loss of Kay's sister Anne Badertscher.

Prayers of Celebration for Elaine Thompson on the birth of great-grandson Donovan.

Prayers of Celebration for Dustin and Leslie Freed on the birth of their daughter Ella Louise, born on November 14.

Prayers of Celebration for Jay and Anne McCracken on the birth of granddaughter Savannah Grace, born on November 11 to Katie and Brian Blaskay.

Prayers for our members and friends serving in the armed forces: especially Kyle Begg, Austin Begg, Andrew Warner, and Lucas Woodward.

Prayers of Healing for Mary Barnett, Sue Mathewson, Sally Reeder, David Rempelsmucker, Dr. Howard Shelly, Blake Stutzman, Carolyn Dahms, Kathy Cook, Sarah Ransome, Kathy Buist, Linda Smith, Rose Ann Garmatter, Carol Fenton, Brennan Leugers, Allison Spangler, Pat Croskery, wife Maria, stepchildren Skylar, Vance and Tierra.

We Lift Our Prayers



Put a prayer request in – take a prayer request out. Look for prayer request slips in the pews and near the prayer box. Or use your own paper. Requests can be as simple as “I’m having back pain,” or “My son is looking for a job.” The slips can be placed in the box or in the offering plates. Prayer requests can be submitted anonymously. Allow someone in your church family to support you in private prayer.



Birthdays

December	4	Marilyn Edwards
		Jim Enneking
	5	Ariana Zuehlke
	9	Tenna Rhonemus
		Jack Henry Neff
	11	Jeanie Nichols
		Cheryl DeWitt
	15	Sarah Gillen
	17	Ben Miracle
	21	Linda Sycks
	22	Samuel Neff
	29	Billy Marshall
	31	Darlene Hey
January	3	Dave Sycks
		Chad Carroll

BPC Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please contact Mike Rhonemus (419-358-8148 / rhonstar@juno.com) or call the church office (419-358-5806) with your prayer request, and they will pass along the information. If you would like to add someone to the prayer chain other than yourself, please be sure to get their permission first. Names and circumstances can be kept confidential, if desired. God knows for whom we pray. If you would like to be part of the chain or would like more information, please contact Mike or another deacon.

Receipts Reminder

If you have Community Market receipts, please bring them in and place them in the baskets on the bulletin board or in the back of the sanctuary. Thank you to Kay Ziessler for coordinating our congregation's participation in this rewards program.





Decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas!!

If you would like to help prepare the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas seasons, the Worship Committee requests that you use the form below to make a monetary donation. The money collected will be used to purchase flowers and other items needed during the Christmas Season.

Please place your completed form (with cash or check) in the offering plate or send to the church (PO Box 149, Bluffton) **by December 18**. Thank you!

I/We wish to donate \$_____.

I/We would like this gift to be given in **Memory Of**:

I/We would like this gift to be given in **Honor Of**:

Name:_____

Bluffton Presbyterian Church
112 N. Main St., P.O. Box 149
Bluffton, OH 45817
419-358-5806
blufftonpc.org

Faith Formation: 9:00 AM
Sunday Worship: 10:15 AM

Pastor: Rev. Karol Farris
Phone: 419-581-9232
Email: pastor@blufftonpc.org
Office Hours: Mon 2-5, Tues 9-2,
Wed 10-12 and by appointment

Secretary: Cathy Carroll
Email: bpcbluff@wcoil.com
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 8:30-12:30

Treasurer: Darin Leugers
Email: dleugers8319@yahoo.com

Organist: Jayne McGarrity
Choir Director: Linda Sycks
Youth Group Director: Tenna Rhonemus
Nursery Helpers: Kori Phipps and
Shawna Anderson
Custodian: Tony Carmack

2018 Church Officers

Session

Clerk of Session – Lori Schmidt
Buildings & Grounds – Tom Hursey
Faith Formation – Tenna Rhonemus
Finance & Stewardship – Dick McGarrity
Mission – Lynda Best
Nominating – Tom Edwards and Cindy Gillen
Personnel – Betsey Angus
Presbytery Commissioner – Lori Schmidt
Worship – Cindy Gillen
Members at Large – Jodi Brauen, Tom Edwards,
and Phil Weisenbarger

Board of Deacons

Moderator: Laura From
Members: Tanya Best, Marilyn Edwards,
Helen Hawk, Mike Rhonemus, and
Dave Van Eman