



What's Happening at Bluffton Presbyterian Church

December 2020

Growing in Faith • Sharing God's Love

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, November 29 – 1st Sunday of Advent

Liturgist: Lin Rumer

Advent Candles: Darlene Hey

Hymn Singers: Tanya Best and Tenna Rhonemus

Sound: Jeff Gillen / Camera: Julia Szabo

Slides: Diane Winebar / Acolytes: Owen & Clara Brauen

Sunday, December 6 – 2nd Sunday of Advent Communion, 3 Cents a Meal Offering

Liturgist: Phil Weisenbarger

Advent Candles: Pat Deal, Lilly and Ethan Friesel

Hymn Singers: Laura From and Lori Schmidt

Sound: Jay McCracken / Camera: Ryan Brauen

Slides: Julia Szabo / Acolytes: McVettas

Sunday, December 13 – 3rd Sunday of Advent Little Free Pantry Offering

Liturgist: Dave Van Eman

Hymn Singers: Linda and Dave Sycks

Sound: Bob Hursh / Camera: Tammie Hursh

Slides: Diane Winebar / Acolyte: Avery Talavinia

Sunday, December 20 – 4th Sunday of Advent

Liturgist: Laura From

Hymn Singers: Julia Szabo and Don Brauen

Sound: Mike Rhonemus / Camera: Tenna Rhonemus

Slides: Talavinias

Acolytes: Avery Talavinia and Bowen Hochstetler

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve 7:00 PM

Pre-Recorded Service on Facebook (Tentative)

Sunday, December 27

Guest Preacher: Tenna Rhonemus

Liturgist: Pam Weisenbarger

Hymn Singers: Tanya Best and Dick McGarrity

Sound: Jeff Gillen / Camera: Julia Szabo

Slides: Cathy Carroll

Acolyte: Owen & Clara Brauen and Ethan Friesel

Sunday, January 3 – Communion

3 Cents a Meal Offering

Mark Your Calendars!

- Nov 29 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*
- Dec 1 – Claralice Circle 6:30 PM
- Dec 6 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*
- Dec 6 – **Congregational Meeting on Zoom after worship**
- Dec 8 – Claralice Circle 6:30 PM
- Dec 10 – Session/Deacons Meeting 7:00 PM
- Dec 13 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*
- Dec 13 – Choir Fellowship Zoom 7:00 PM
- Dec 15 – Claralice Circle 6:30 PM
- Dec 17 – Deacons 6:30 PM
- **Dec 17 – Newsletter Items Deadline:**
gillen3072@roadrunner.com
- Dec 20 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*
- Dec 22 – Claralice Circle 6:30 PM
- Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve 7:00 PM *Pre-Recorded Service on Facebook (tentative)*
- Dec 25 – Christ is Born! Christmas Blessings!
- Dec 26 – Lima Rescue Mission:
Contact Bob Hursh
- Dec 27 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*

*Weekly worship will be recorded on Sunday mornings at 10:15 AM. We will hold in-person worship ONLY when the Ohio Public Health Advisory System determines that Allen County is in Level 1 or 2, Yellow or Orange. Every week, regardless of in-person worship status, online worship will be made available on our [Facebook page](#) and later posted to our [church website](#).

Faith Formation

Sister Min Circle meetings are on hold until spring when the group will discuss future plans. Claralice Circle continues to meet on Tuesday evenings, coming together both in person and through zoom. Adult Faith Formation meets Sundays from 9:00 – 9:30 AM on Zoom.



Pastor's Letter

Like it or not, this will not be a normal holiday season. As we enter prepare for Advent and Christmas, perhaps we had hoped that the familiar rituals of this special season would be unaffected by the pandemic that has overwhelmed most of the calendar year. And yet, it seems that the pandemic will be interfering with our Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings, no less than it did our Easter celebrations, graduations, and summer vacation plans. Though, we admit, our plans are a small price to pay compared to those whose health and lives are on the line against the deadly virus.

With so many activities cancelled, altered, or postponed until next year, we may be tempted to adopt a passive attitude about our role in the world. But we are not nobodies – we are followers of Jesus, the one whose arrival this season announces. We have important roles to fulfill, especially in a world full of suffering.

Donna Frischknecht Jackson, editor of *Presbyterians Today*, remembers a powerful embodied experience leading her to consider what “role” she might play this Christmas. She writes: “I often find myself staring long and hard at the nativity scene, trying to imagine all of the holy sights and sounds. As I stare, I wonder, “What is my role in this pageant of grace?”

In years past, I have never had the time to really answer that question. There were always things to distract me – gifts to wrap, cookies to make, worship services to plan, church dinners, and decorating parties. I believe this year, though, we are being given a chance to reassess and define our roles. I believe we are being given an opportunity to step into the narrative in a powerful, albeit uncomfortable and not exactly what we might have wanted, new way.

With many congregations forgoing in-person Christmas Eve worship services due to COVID-19 precautions, we will be faced with emotions not [typically] associated with the celebration of this holy night.

We will perhaps feel the fear of uncertainty and a disorienting sense of displacement. But wasn't there uncertainty and displacement that very first Christmas? If you think you are disappointed that you won't be able to sit in your church pew, imagine how Mary must have felt giving birth away from home and in a stable. Yet God was there – and is still here with us.

What if our COVID-19-tinged Christmas is actually a moment to make the story of salvation real? What if the most beautiful Christmas hymn is not performed by a choir, but sung in your off-key voice over Zoom or the phone to a lonely friend? What if the light that shines in the dark comes from our hearts, rather than from those little candles we hold while singing “Silent Night”? What if this year, by finding ourselves in a place we have never been before, scattered from one another without the traditions we cherish, we discover that we have an opportunity to participate in salvation's scenes beyond a sanctuary?

My prayer for us all is this Christmas we find ourselves standing in awe as we squeal with the realization, I'm in the Christmas story!”
(*Presbyterians Today* Nov/Dec 2020 pg. 4).

May we all use our quieter celebration this Advent and Christmas to reflect on the unique role God is calling us to fulfill in the great story of faith. Now is the time to say yes to God's call, to love God and to love neighbor. Love – the most important action of all, and the one God shows us in the birth of Jesus.

In Christ,

Pastor Karol



Advent

The season of Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. Advent means “coming” or “arrival.” Advent anticipates not only the birth of Jesus, but also the coming of Christ at the end of time, to fulfill God’s intention for creation and to bring a new heaven and a new earth into being. When the celebration of Advent first began, the focus was on the coming of Christ into the future more than on the birth of Jesus. Early liturgical calendars placed Advent at the end of the church year rather than at the beginning for this very reason. During Advent, we read from the prophet Isaiah, who told of the Savior who would bring hope to God’s people in a time of oppression. We recall the role of John the Baptist, calling for people to repent of their sins in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. We are reminded of God’s steadfast love for us in a world that is unsettled and ever changing. We reaffirm that God is engaged in the workings of creation, for God is with us – Emmanuel. The church faces the ongoing challenge of celebrating Advent as its own season and not rushing too quickly into Christmas. The time of repentance and preparation is necessary before we welcome the Savior into our lives and into the world.

Zoom Instructions for All Church Calls (Including Congregational Meeting on December 6 after worship)

*To Log in **WITH VIDEO ON YOUR
COMPUTER, TABLET, OR SMARTPHONE,**
Follow These Steps:*

*To join with video via computer, tablet, or
smartphone:*

Step 1: Click This Link:

XXXXXXXXXXXX

You will be in the "waiting room" for just a moment before you're in!

To call in via landline phone or cell phone:

Step 1: Call this phone number: XXXXXX

**Step 2: When it asks for a meeting ID enter:
XXXXXXXX and then press #.**

**Step 3: When it asks for a participant ID, just
press # to continue.**

You will be in the "waiting room" for just a moment before you're in!

Advent Worship Series: “Where We Belong”

November 29 – December 20

Sundays at 10:15AM

As Christ came to dwell among us,
we too seek a place to dwell.



Christmas Eve Worship

Thursday, December 24

7:00 PM on our Facebook page

Featuring various children, youth,
and adults. Join us for the
Christmas story, music, and a
message.

You are encouraged to light a candle
at home during the singing of
“Silent Night.”

www.facebook.com/blufftonpc

Congregational Meeting on Zoom Called for Sunday, December 6

Session has called a Congregational Meeting via Zoom following the 10:15 AM worship service on Sunday, December 6 to elect Deacons, Elders, Nominating Committee, and to approve Pastor's Terms of Call for 2021. Since we anticipate the congregation will continue to worship from home via livestream, time will be given to switch from watching worship on Facebook to joining the Zoom video/conference call. Zoom allows members to participate either via electronic device or by calling in on a phone. If you would like additional tips for how to use Zoom, [go to this website](#) and follow the "click here" links for more detailed step-by-step instructions. We will use the same Zoom information (link for video; phone number and meeting ID for phone) for all church calls. A practice time can be held during the week prior; if you would like to participate in a practice Zoom call, please contact Pastor Karol.

Decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas!

If you would like to give a gift in memory of loved ones for the Advent and Christmas seasons, the Worship Committee requests that you use the form included in this newsletter to make a monetary donation **by December 14**. Your gift will be used to purchase poinsettias and other items.



Please send your completed form, together with your payment, to the church (PO Box 149, Bluffton, OH 45817). Or bring to the church during office hours (Tues. and Thurs. mornings). You may also place in the treasurer's lockbox in the office any time. Thank you!

Communications Position

Based on the recommendation of New Beginnings and Session approval, Personnel will pursue hiring an hourly, part-time staff position focused on communications. Primary responsibilities are:

1. Manage internal congregational electronic sign designs.
2. Facilitate the electronic sign request/approval/publishing process*.
3. Create graphics and layout for the weekly congregation email.
4. Provide communications/graphics support and development to the congregation.

4-6 hours per week is initially forecasted with the potential of up to 10 hours per week. This position is for one year with the possibility of re-hire for future years.

If you or someone you know has an interest, please reach out to Betsey Angus or any Personnel Committee member.

** Internal and non-profit community signs will be approved by a designated church member.*

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
January	29	Billy Marshall
	31	Darlene Hey
	1	Tammie Mericle
	3	Dave Sycks
		Chad Carroll

Star Word

Here is a star word reflection from
Tenna Rhonemus:



I was home sick the Sunday the star words were passed out. Mike grabbed one for me – *healing*. I laughed when I read it, but he promised he had randomly selected it.

I was feeling better the next day, and being a "checklist" person, I remembered my word and thought "one and done". But my word wasn't *healed*, it was *healing*. That difference in suffix is important. *Healing* is not something we can simply mark off our "to do" list, it is an ongoing process. I was determined to make healing an ongoing focus. But where was I to begin... a quote from Linda Hogan gave me a good starting point.

"Some people see scars, and it is wounding they remember. To me they are proof of the fact that there is healing."

Boy has this been a year of wounding! I have experienced and witnessed wounds on every level—globally down to personally. I imagine we all have our own exhaustive list of wounds. But my focus was on *healing*. So I began looking for scars in the hopes of finding proof of healing.

Typically we avoid looking for scars. They make us uncomfortable, we avert our eyes and avoid discussing them. Those who bear them may try to hide or disguise them. If they are our own, they may hold painful memories we want to forget. But if we view them *"as proof of the fact that there is healing"* everything changes. Scars become a symbol of progress toward physical, emotional and/ or mental wellbeing. They become a testament to strength and endurance. The act of seeing and ultimately embracing scars, whether our own or those of others, is an act of love. And isn't love at the root of everything that is good, including healing?

I am working to embrace scars as a means of finding and hopefully offering healing. Admittedly, I am not good at this, but just as healing is a process, so is the embracing of scars. I am committed to this process because I am committed to sharing love.

My focus on scars, as proof of healing and ultimately love, also led me to a renewed perspective of my faith. I have been given the ultimate proof of healing. Out of love, Christ endured and overcame the wound of sin on my behalf. I can look upon the scars that Jesus bears and know that there is healing. It seems weird to write about this as we are approaching Advent and looking forward to the arrival of Jesus as a baby. Many may think this is more appropriate for Lent. But may these words from Psalms remind us why Jesus came, and may we give thanks for healing, scars and most importantly love.

Psalm 107:20-21

"He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for humankind."



Deacons

Your Deacons have provided their cell phone numbers below for the congregation's convenience. Please do not hesitate to call any of us, for needs you may have. The Deacons are planning not only communion, but a few other things in the next couple months. They want to thank all of the members who are checking on others.

Hope to see you soon!

Tanya Best
Craig Bowman
Laura From
Helen Hawk
Dave Van Eman

Highlights of October Session Meeting

- *October Pastoral Care:* 5 visits; 26 calls; 18 cards sent.
Congregational Activities: worship, weekly email, Facebook posts, Claralice Circle, Lima Rescue Mission Meal, attended Memorial Service for Tyler From, Faith Formation Class, Faith Formation Intern Supervision, Youth Group Escape Room Zoom, and committee meetings.
Community Engagement: BAMA Election Day prayer series and BAMA ecumenical Thanksgiving service on Facebook.
Presbytery: Rekindle Youth Retreat Planning Zoom, New Pastors' Group Gathering, Installation Commission and Zoom Service for Rev. Lanie Sipes (Toledo Christ Presbyterian Church), Discipleship Commission, and MVP General Presbyter/pastoral leaders check in. Appointed to serve as moderator for the Ottawa PC Session after their pastor leaves on November 22. Nominated to chair the Discipleship Commission for 2021.
Continuing Education: October 23–29 completed Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process first of three. Approved Continuing Education request for 2021 February 8-15 to attend Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process second of three.
Service to the Greater Church: November 9-12 for Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Alum Board Meeting/Reunion (elected Secretary of Alum Board), MVP Rekindle Youth Retreat (November 13 -15) cancelled.
Proposed Dates for New Officers:
Congregational Meeting to elect officers and approve Pastors' Terms of Call – December 6, Training for Incoming Officers – TBD, Session Meeting to examine new officers for Installation/Ordination – December 10, and Installation/Ordination of new officers during worship – January 10.

Approval given to Marilyn Edwards to borrow church's wheelchair. Dorothy Hursey died November 8 – no service at this time.

- Fellowship bonfire held at Don and Cathy Carroll's on October 31. Deacons' BBQ dinner profit \$329. Served 63 meals at the Community Meal. Meal following Tyler From's Celebration of Life went well.
- Toilet in men's restroom probably needs replaced. First Klass Lawncare will be fertilizing the manse yard.
- Adult Faith Formation class trying a Zoom format for their "Unravelling" discussions. "Growing in God's Love" lessons and youth Bibles distributed to the families with children. Youth Group has been meeting via Zoom for Bible studies with some activities tentatively scheduled in person. Claralice Circle continues to meet in person. Have not received any updates regarding Release Time Weekday Christian Education plans for the new year.
- Adopt-a-family – plan to adopt 1-2 families with wish list to be sent electronically to church family. Blanket tying materials ready for congregation – designated \$100 from local mission money to purchase kits. Lima Rescue Mission – \$100 from Local Mission to support the December pizza meal. Collected \$316 for Peace & Global Witness Offering. Sponsored 30 children (\$3 per child) for Bluffton Annual Child Safety Education Program – normally supported National Night Out, but was cancelled this year. Little Free Food Pantry continues to get support from Dollar General and local donations. Christmas Joy offering will be collected through December. Lynda Best coordinated food for set up volunteers for Blaze of Lights on November 6. There will not be a public lighting event, so will not be serving annual dinner.
- Nominating Committee has secured nominations for almost all officer positions for next year. Staff evaluations completed. Personnel Committee met via Zoom for Pastor's evaluation. Betsey Angus connected with other employees.

- Reviewed draft 2021 operating budget for initial discussion, with goal of incorporating elders' recommendations to obtain Session approval of budget at December's Session meeting. Approved to continue paying Nursery staff and Choir Director at present reduced amounts into 2021 until their positions would return to regular responsibilities. Proposed budget includes increases for staff – amount recommended by Personnel. Pastor Karol excused herself so elders could discuss pastor salary increase to propose to congregation. Approved to recommend increase with line items to be worked out between Clair/Pastor Karol. Discussion of Roll On fund – Pastor Karol talked with Laura From to discern financial situation. Church will pay full amount on van loan payment until it is sold then assist with outstanding medical and death bills. Plan to stop collecting money for this account at end of 2020. Laura will receive any remaining money after loan payments, bills covered. Approved Personnel's request to give all staff \$150 Christmas gift this year in recognition of extra work required of staff during pandemic.
- Continuing to follow state's color-coding level system for determining status of worship gatherings, presently Level 3 (red), with online service only, with readers, etc. in attendance. Minor adjustments had been made to in-person worship prior to county going to Level 3. Working on sound quality of live stream services. Plan to bring in a professional sound tech to make equipment adjustments, standardize procedures. Expecting Christmas Eve Service to be recorded and shared electronically. Pulpit Supply: November 15 – George Stultz and December 27 – Tenna Rhonemus.
- Approved calling Congregational Meeting via Zoom for Sunday, December 6 following livestream service for the purposes of electing Elders, Deacons, Nominating Committee for 2021 and approving Pastor's Terms of Call for 2021.

- Bob and Tammie Hursh, along with support of others, will continue monthly Pizza Night for Lima Rescue Mission for 2021. Approved the job description for Communications Coordination position and salary range for 2021. Approved Digital Communication Policy (for outside organizations wanting to have messages on new sign).



October 2020 Financial Report

General Fund Budgeted Items

Balance January 1, 2020

Receipts thru Oct. 31

Expenses thru Oct. 31

Balance Oct. 31, 2020

Thank you for financially supporting the church's budget.

Up to \$300 Tax Deduction Available for 2020 Tax Returns

(Certain phrases copied from CAPINCROUSE)

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the CARES Act) enacted in March 2020 includes an incentive for charitable donations (such as your gifts to Bluffton Presbyterian Church!). For 2020 only, taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions may claim a charitable contribution deduction up to \$300 for the taxable year for contributions of money made to a qualified charitable/religious organization. This one-year provision does not permit an above-the-line deduction for unused charitable contributions carried forward from a prior year.

The CARES Act does not explicitly address whether couples filing a joint return may claim \$300 each. This information may not become available until the instructions for 2020 form 1040 are published. The Stewardship & Finance Committee will let you know if we become aware of any updates on this question.

Update on Roll-On Fund

On behalf of Laura From and the Bluffton Presbyterian Church Session, thank you for your generous support of the Roll-On Transportation fund, which provided 50% of the monthly payment obligation to Tyler and Laura From for their special-needs van. Your assistance ensured that Tyler and Laura had a reliable means of transportation.

Due to Tyler's passing on October 9, Bluffton Presbyterian Church will discontinue collecting funds for the Roll-On fund at the end of this year. Session has approved the utilization of Roll-On funds to assist Laura's ongoing needs to fund the van loan until the van is sold, with the remainder utilized to assist with Laura's financial expenses. On October 31, Roll-On funds totaled \$6,439.

Mission News

Building Resilience Together

Letter excerpt from Jhan Dotel-Vellenga and Ian Vellenga, mission co-workers serving in Nicaragua.

Several weeks ago, we took part in a workshop about building resilience. It was put together by the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program for all of those interested in learning a little more about the topic and perhaps sharing it with others.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from challenging times in life. Resilience comes from the lessons and skills we learn as we grow up and as we face difficulties. It's a person's natural ability to cope, deal with, and adapt to hardship and adversity when they are faced with calamity, natural disasters, health concerns, relationship troubles, divorces, tragedies, school challenges, job losses, or the death of a loved one.

Many countries, mainly developed ones, have created and invested in social protection programs to help individuals and families, especially the poor and vulnerable ones, to cope with natural disasters and different types of crises.

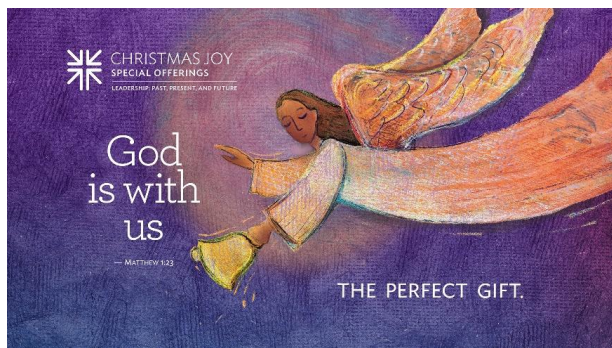
This makes me think about the people and communities we work with in Nicaragua. Communities that are underprivileged and not well served, where most of the people face multiple challenges daily, such as meeting basic daily needs for themselves and their families. Their challenges go way beyond the random natural disaster or unpredictable global pandemic. Many of them are part of communities where basic education, healthcare, and potable water are still lacking, and the means to provide them is a big challenge. Their strength and capacity to endure often come from a place of optimism and hope. They show incredible resilience and creativity in the face of deprivation and poverty.



An important component of CEPAD's work is to support and assist people living in rural communities by implementing programs that aim to help them better support themselves and their families through community training, leadership, sustainable agriculture, economic development, and much more. Part of what we can do as partners of communities like these is add to that resilience by providing a listening ear and, when possible, a helping hand. The people in these communities are already good at surviving, but as partners we can help them to thrive and flourish. We might not be able to help them to meet all their needs or even resolve many of the problems they face, but with our support we can help to strengthen their ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity.

We thank you for your support to our work and mission, and for keeping the people of Nicaragua and CEPAD in your thoughts. We pray for your safety and well-being during these troubled times and hope you are surrounded by love and abiding grace.

Ian and Jhan



Christmas Joy is one of four PCUSA special offerings. This offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. Gifts are distributed equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage.

To learn more, visit

<https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>. Gifts will be accepted through December – pay by check or use the online giving option.

Blanket Tying Project

Need something to do while spending time at home? No Sew Blanket kits are available in the basement fellowship area as a mission project. Just cut fringe around the edges and tie together! Blankets will be provided to our Adopt-A-Families as well as to area shelters. Finished blankets are due to church by December 15.

Lima Rescue Mission

Another month, another Pizza Night at Lima Rescue Mission. Thanks to all contributors and participants, we were able to provide pizza again on Saturday, October 14. Next scheduled Pizza Night is December 26. Please contact Bob Hursh if you are interested in contributing or participating.

Global Peace & Witness Offering

Thank you for your support of this PCUSA special offering. Bluffton University's Lion & Lamb Peace Arts Center received \$80 and \$236 went to the denomination to support global peace and justice work.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)

is responding to the urgent needs in Central America following Hurricanes Eta and Iota. PDA started processing preliminary emergency assistance soon after Eta to our long-term partners in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras, but with the additional impact of Category 4 Iota making landfall on the coast of Nicaragua, the needs are even greater. The double impact of these storms has resulted in over 100 lives lost and significant damage from flooding and mudslides; mass evacuations are further complicated by COVID-19. Priorities for the response include WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), food security, shelter, and livelihood restoration.

To support this response, designate gifts to **DR000194**.

To give by phone, call 800-872-3283.

To send a check, please designate where you want your gift to go on the memo line and mail to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

Little Food Pantry

Donations of soup (vegetable beef, chicken noodle, tomato), spaghetti, tuna, beef stew, or cash are welcome to support our community program. Bring donations to worship on the 2nd Sunday or drop-off in the church basement fellowship area.

Weekly Pantry Checkers

Nov 30-Dec 6 – Carole Enneking

Dec 7-13 – Sarah Brauen

Dec 14-20 – Sue Van Eman

Dec 21-27 – Diane Winebar

Dec 28-Jan 4 – Jodi Brauen

Adopt-A-Family

Even through the pandemic, our congregation will continue the long-standing tradition of helping area families with a special Christmas. This year we will sponsor: Person #1, a 67-year old female, and Family #10 including grandfather, mother and her two daughters (age 9 and 2). Wrapped gifts and monetary donations are due by Sunday, December 13; the church office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 AM to noon, or call Carole Enneking to arrange pick up. Online giving is available on the website. We are using SignUp.com to help with this project.

Here's how it works:

- 1) Click this link to see our SignUp:
XXXXXXX
- 2) Review the gift list and choose the items you like.



Advent and Christmas Daily Devotions

Check out this year's online (printable) Advent & Christmas devotional from *Presbyterians Today*. Howard Thurman's classic poem – "I Will Light Candles This Christmas" – says that the light that burns brightly is the light of Christ shining through us. It's a light that dashes away sadness with joy, replaces fear with courage, and banishes despair with hope. This year has indeed been one in need of light. It's been a year of pandemic, coupled with racial and political unrest. It's been an unprecedented year that has pushed us into speaking boldly and truthfully. It has dared us to step away from the comfort of doing things in the old familiar way and to try something new in our ministries.

Our Advent and Christmas devotional for 2020 is no exception. This year's devotional is online only and is available for free at pcusa.org/2020advent. You can also download or print a PDF of each week's section.

The theme is based on lighting those candles featured in Thurman's poem – challenging us to shine not only through the four weeks of Advent, but also through the 12 days of Christmas and ending with the celebration of Epiphany. Each week starts with a stanza from Thurman's poem and reflection questions. Subsequent days feature a Scripture verse, reflection, closing prayer and an option to go deeper with suggestions for other activities.

BPC Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please contact Craig Bowman. PLEASE leave a message if no answer. Or call the church office with your prayer request, and we will pass along the information. If you would like to add someone else to the prayer chain, 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 Craig or another deacon.



Prayers of Sympathy for:

The family of Dorothy Hursey (Tom Hursey's mother) who passed away November 8.

The family of Walter Schmidt (Lori Schmidt's father) who passed away November 17.

The family of Jim Walter (Lori Schmidt's uncle) who passed away November 19.

The family of Elizabeth Bower (Dustin Freed's grandmother) who passed away recently at the age of 104.

The family of Jay Begg (Bev Begg's nephew) who passed away recently; he had been in a major accident a year ago.

The family of Larry (Smitty) Smith (friend of Gayle Marshall) in Milan, OH who passed away October 31.

The family of Bruce Stainbrook. Emily Brink's (friend of Jade Hochstetler) father passed away unexpected October 31 after a heart stent to prep for a possible transplant.

Prayers of Celebration for Kay and Owen Ziessler on the birth of two great-grandsons in September and October: Madden Lieb (Blythe and Brennan Lieb) and Heston Hines (Whitney and Nick Hines).

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

Prayers for those who live alone or in care facilities and are less able to engage in meaningful connections with family members and friends, including Marilyn Bullock, Peggy Hursey, Sally Reeder, Dortha Radabaugh, Hazel Rodabaugh, Jeanette Warren, and Ralph & Donnie Middleton.

Prayers of Healing for:

Lori Schmidt and her mother Alyce Ann as they grieve and recover from COVID-19.

Judy Miracle who has been placed under hospice care at home.

Lynda and Kim Best and daughter Andrea Best who are all sick with COVID-19.

Sue Mathewson who had knee replacement surgery on November 20.

Jim Basinger (Jodi Brauen's brother in Michigan) who is in the hospital with severe pancreatitis after having chest pains at work.

Julene Walters (Jodi Brauen's friend) who has esophageal cancer and will be having surgery soon.

Faith Samsal (Mariah Pneuman's great-granddaughter in Florida) is pregnant and has just been diagnosed with diabetes.

Marie and Ron Gallaher (Bev Begg's sister and brother-in-law) as Ron remains in Blanchard Valley hospital with serious complications from surgery.

Jeff McKanna who was in an accident while tearing down a garage and has many broken bones (shared by Bev Begg).

Ken Ruckzo (McCracken family friend) has brain cancer that has spread to other organs.

Marilyn Edwards who is recovering from foot surgery.

A third grade student at Bath Elementary School (where Lori Schmidt volunteers) who is hospitalized in Columbus for heart issues.

Cheryl Martin and Kim Weber (Lynda Bests' aunt and partner) who both have significant health issues, as well as Lynda who is helping with care arrangements. Kim's father recently died from COVID-19.

Mary Morscheck (sister of Jeanie Nichols) who has COVID-19.

Prayers of wisdom and compassion heading into the holiday season for making hard decisions to slow the spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Special prayers for all the families of the more than 1.3 million people worldwide who have died from this virus.

Prayers for those affected by recent acts of violence and natural disasters around the world.

New Contact Information

Don't forget to let Cathy Carroll know when you have a change in address, phone number, and/or email address.

If your birthday or one you know of a birthday that does not show up in our newsletter, please let Cindy Gillen know.

Decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas!

If you would like to help prepare the sanctuary for Christmas, please use the form below to make a monetary donation. Your gift will be used for poinsettias and other Advent/Christmas items.



Send your completed form and donation (checks payable to Bluffton Presbyterian Church, "Poinsettias" on the memo line) to the church: PO Box 149, Bluffton, OH 45817. You may also bring to the church during office hours (Tuesday and Thursday mornings) or place in the treasurer's lockbox in the church office at any time.

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: _____

2021 Operating Funds - Bluffton Presbyterian Church

Live Courageously!

...take hold of the life that really is life – 1 Timothy 6:18-19

I/We thank God for the continuing opportunity to sustain and grow the ministries of Bluffton Presbyterian Church by generously sharing my/our talents and financial resources. I/we commit to give financial resources to the church operating fund as follows in 2021:

\$_____ weekly, or \$_____ monthly / quarterly / annual (please circle one)

(signature[s])

(name[s] printed)

Thank you for your commitment. Please check here if you prefer to not receive an acknowledgement: ☐
Please note that this commitment can be changed at any time as circumstances arise by notifying our Treasurer, Julia Szabo.

2021 Operating Funds Campaign Update

Help leaf-out the colorful BPC Live Courageously tree!

Thank you to everyone who has turned in a 2021 operating budget commitment card. Each card that is turned in is represented by a colorful leaf on the Live Courageously tree. If you have not had a chance to turn in a commitment card yet, please prayerfully consider doing so and help fill out the Live Courageously tree! The next time you “dart” into the church, stop by the sanctuary to check out the tree’s progress!



Through Nov. 17, we have 19 commitments for 2021 operating funds totaling \$XXXXXX.
For 2020, we had 39 commitments totaling \$XXXXXX.

Bluffton Presbyterian Church
112 N. Main St., P.O. Box 149
Bluffton, OH 45817

Adult Faith Formation: Sundays 9:00 – 9:30 AM
Sunday Worship: 10:15 AM

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor: Rev. Karol Farris Schilling

Phone:

Email:

Primary Work Days: Tuesday – Friday

In-Office Hours: Wed & Thurs 10-1

Secretary: Cathy Carroll

Email:

Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 9-12

Treasurer: Julia Szabo

Email:

Faith Formation Intern: Adam Shanaman

Email:

Organists: Jayne McGarrity and Sue Van Eman

Choir Director: Linda Sycks

Nursery Helpers: Kori Phipps and Shawna Anderson

Custodian: Roger Brodman

2020 Church Officers

Session

Clerk of Session – Lori Schmidt

Buildings & Grounds – Lynda Best

Faith Formation – Tenna Rhonemus

Fellowship – Jodi Brauen

Finance & Stewardship – Clair Winebar

Mission – Carole Enneking

New Beginnings – Sarah Brauen

Nominating – Lynda Best and Tenna Rhonemus

Personnel – Betsey Angus

Presbytery Commissioner – Lori Schmidt

Worship – Diane Winebar

Members at Large – Sarah Brauen and Lori Schmidt

Board of Deacons

Moderator: Helen Hawk

Assistant Moderator: Laura From

Members: Tanya Best, Craig Bowman,

Dave Van Eman