



OHIO UNITED

Presbyterian Church

December 17 through December 23, 2023



Isaiah 40:1-3

“Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God...

A voice cries out:

‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’

Isaiah 40: 1 & 3

Dear Friends in Faith,

The deeper chill of winter’s wind made me catch my breath a bit as my right eye watered and my pace quickened. I was on a morning walk leaning into the hope of a steaming cup of coffee with a colleague. There’s something comforting, for me, in both coffee and conversations with friends and in brisk air of the season (once my bones adjust).

Advent, as we let it seep ever deeper into our bones, brings comfort. A comfort that comes not in checking things of our ‘are we ready’ list. Advent comfort comes as we settle our minds into the promises of hope, peace, joy and love. The second portion of the book of Isaiah comes to us from the time of the exile in Babylon. The people of Israel have been marched off to a foreign land, living for many years with little hope of returning to their homeland. Then, Nebuchadnezzar dies and the kingdom begins to totter. The winds of change are blowing and it is a welcome breeze.

Into that time the words we hear from chapters 40-55 begin to bring hope. Words both to the people as a nation and touching each individual. ‘Comfort, O comfort my people...prepare the way of the Lord.’ Words that originally said, we may be able to go home. The highway is one on which the Lord will arrive in Babylon and then lead the people home. Later, this prophecy is revisited with the arrival of Jesus. “Prepare the way...”

In Advent we again prepare our hearts and minds for the arrival of the one who comes to us, abides with us, our Lord, Emmanuel.

with hope, peace & joy,

pastor bob



The Cantata, “**We Call It Christmas Because of Jesus,**” will be presented on Sunday, December 17. As music speaks to all ages, there will not be a children’s Sunday school hour.

Sunday, December 24 will feature two worship opportunities. At 10:00AM we will light the fourth Advent Candle and worship with eyes peering toward Jesus’ arrival, just around the corner. Everyone is encouraged to wear a favorite Christmas sweater or, perhaps, your Christmas pj’s. At our 6:00PM service we will light the Christ Candle as we worship with Carols & Candlelight. Both worship services will be ‘child friendly.’ Come to one or both as your hearts and life schedules lead.

On **December 31, the Seventh Day of Christmas**, we will enjoy scripture, stories and Christmas carols in a light and joy filled worship time.

Children’s Sunday School will not meet through December 31. Classes will resume on January 7, 2024!

Spread some Christmas cheer using our **Christmas Card Mailbox** in the Narthex! Please “mail” your cards according to the recipient’s last name. Also, please try to limit your cards to people who regularly attend church services.



Worship

- Cantata is this Sunday, December 17 during worship
- Choir rehearsal on December 21 at 7pm

Congregational Care

- Adult Sunday School from 9am to 9:45am
- There will not be Children's Sunday School from December 10 to December 31. Classes will resume January 7, 2024!
- There is no Story Time on December 20 and December 27. It will resume on Wednesday, January 3 at 10am

Missions

-

Operations

- Year to date (end of November)
Expenditures \$199,559 Received \$167,239
Per Capita expense \$10,023
Received YTD \$2,280
- 126 in worship on December 10

Blue Christmas
Service of Healing and Wholeness

Thursday, December 21 at 7:00pm

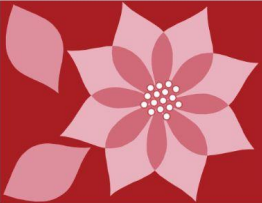
At

Concord Presbyterian Church, 2832 Conway Wallrose Rd., Baden

All are warmly welcomed to come and experience God's healing and wholeness this longest night of the year. This quiet reflective service is offered acknowledging that Christmas is a particularly difficult time for those who grieve. For more information, download

<https://files.constantcontact.com/45869a00101/30b69551-c992-4526-8759-24e4c4994cf4.pdf?rdr=true>





DECEMBER

Birthdays & Anniversaries

<u>Anniversaries</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>
Holly & William Diccio 12/18	MacKenzie Petrella 12/01	Sherri Murdoch 12/09	Kenneth Strominger 12/20
Marsha & Mark Douglass 12/21	Whitney Shaffer 12/03	Roberta Smith 12/10	Kathy Fouse 12/21
Cherryl & Zbig Lachowicz 12/27	Shane McLinden 12/05	Dale Fouse 12/13	Kathy Lee Tolfa 12/25
Russell & Wendy Dameron 12/28	Lynn Smith 12/06	Joe Glatz 12/13	Mark Douglass 12/27
Jason & Gina Arzberger 12/30	Chandler Dameron 12/07	Betty Martin 12/17	Daniel Palmer 12/29
	Russell Dameron 12/07	Joel Mitchell 12/18	Andrew Arzberger 12/30
	Wendy Dameron 12/07	Mark Muslin 12/18	
	Nancy Connell 12/09	Kristine Dameron 12/20	

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy.

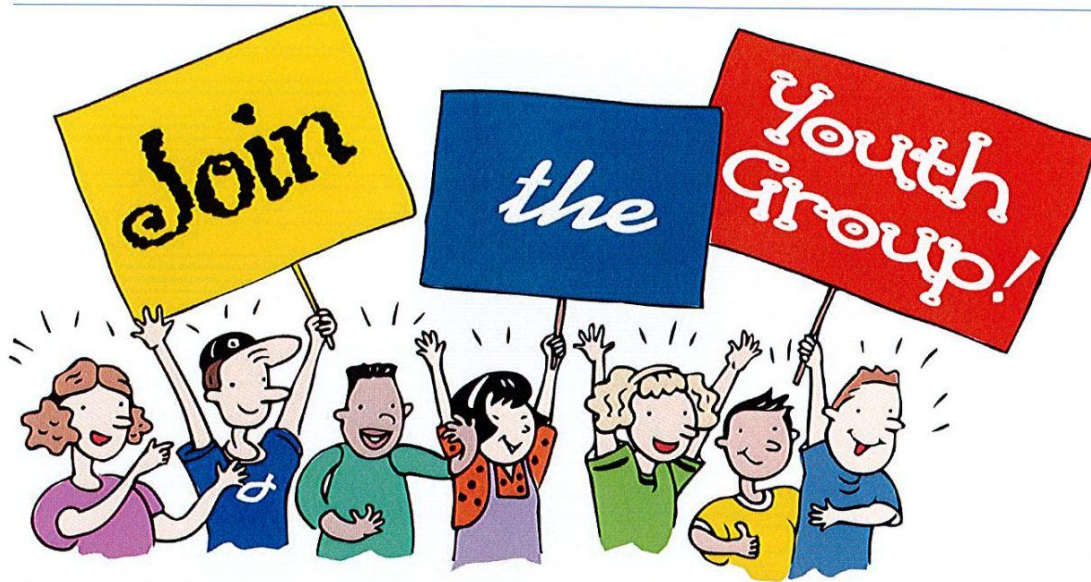
Philippians 1:3-4



- Thank you to the children for a wonderful program!
- Diane Gennaro–Continued prayers for Jack who is home from the hospital but saw an oncologist on Wednesday. Prayers for Diane as she is having back problems.
- Peggy Franzese–She is going to travel to see her brother who is in hospice. Prayers for the family.
- Jeff Barth–Prayers for Nick who is in Kentucky working.
- Jen Davis–Joy for the Hopewell Big Band Concert this past Thursday.
- Marcus McCowen–Prayers for grandmother who has ovarian cancer
- Kristen Nan–Prayers for her dear friend Nicole Ozimok’s mom Bea Masterson who is Grammy Bea to all of them. She is now in hospice care at home. After many years of beating cancer (6X) it is now back and in her bones. Prayers for all.
- Prayers for peace on earth.
- Please keep the Smith family in your prayers as Roberta Smith passed away early this week.

The kids in Youth Group have a few prayer requests that they put in a private prayer box:

- Prayers for my aunt’s wedding to go well and that she and her husband will love each other.
- Prayers for Miss Peggy’s brother.
- Prayers for Miss Lynn’s back so she is in less pain.



November 5 – 6-7:30 Meeting at the Manse

November 12 – Peggy is away

November 19 – 6-7:30 Meeting at the Manse

November 26 – 6-7:30 Meeting at the Manse

December 3 – 11:00 Gingerbread House

Decorating Fellowship Hall – See attachment

December 10 – 6-7:30 Youth Group Christmas Party

December 17 – 6-7:30 Youth Group Christmas Caroling

Need at least 2 helpers at Youth Group

No Youth Group December 24 and 31

November 28th Session Meeting Highlights

- The administration approved a church use request from Rose George to use the kitchen and fellowship hall for a baby shower on Saturday, January 6th, 2024.
- Session approved use of Sanctuary to Trinity Choir on Sunday afternoons 1:30pm to 5pm for rehearsals January 14th, 2024 thru March 3rd, 2024. Also, use of the kitchen and fellowship hall Saturday, March 9th, 2024. (time to be determined).
- Infant baptism was administered to Callan Lindsay Crosby on November 12th, 2023.
- Joe Glatz was elected as Clerk of Session for 2024.
- The Clerk reported that three member deaths occurred since September: Marian Douglass 10/5/2023, Carl Gartley 10/15/2023, and Gwendolyn Hines 10/22/2023.
- Approved 3 policies: Harassment, Paid Family Medical Leave, and Van Use Guidelines.
- Reviewed, modified, then approved the 2024 Budget.
- Approved the 2024 Pastor's Contract.
- Approved the renewal of the lease with Cares of Western PA.
- Approved to continue quarterly per-capita payments to Presbytery.
- Ordination/Installation of Deacons and Elders tentatively scheduled for January 7th, 2024 depending on availability of the elected officers.
- Approved removal from the active church rolls the following:

Shawn Bruno
Grace Byers
Paul Hurni
Donald Sanders

Stephanie Strominger
Elaine Verostek
Zac Verostek
Matt Laitres

- Off going session elders Charles Hendrick and Nancy Lucas were commended for their service.

Results of the December 3rd Congregational Meeting to Elect Officers

Deacons

Class of 2026 (4)

Dianne Kanitra (2nd term)
Dave Kocher
Ivonne Markish
Greg Holsinger

Class of 2025 (1)

Dawn Psik

Elders

Class of 2026 (4)

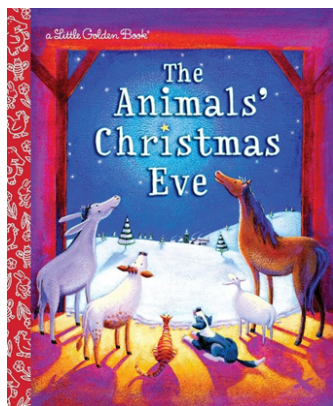
Rich Palmer (2nd term)
John Martin (2nd term)
Jennifer Davis
Joe Glatz

Joe Glatz, Clerk of Session



Garden of Knowledge Library

As we expand our library, we have created an Amazon wish list that you may purchase books for our library. The books range in age from newborn to young adult. Here is a link to our wish list: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/11KT1O8IDN6AG/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_2



The Animals' Christmas Eve by Gale Wiersum (author)

In the barn on Christmas Eve,

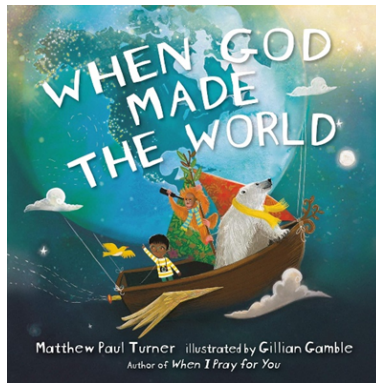
After all the people leave,

The animals, in voices low,

Remember Christmas long ago . . .

So begins a sweet rhyming story in which a group of animals recounts the events surrounding Jesus' birth in the manger, and the parts some of their ancestors played in it.

Recommended for ages 2-5.



When God Made the World by Matthew Paul Turner (author)

Matthew Paul Turner's *When God Made the World* focuses on the complex way that God created our vast and scientifically operating universe, including the biodiversity of life on our planet and the intricacies of a vast solar system. Scottish illustrator Gillian Gamble brings the natural world to vibrant life with rich colors and poignant detail certain to stretch young minds and engage imaginations.

Recommended for ages 3-7.

After a complete inventory of our Garden of Knowledge Library, we are missing some books, many were checked out prior to the pandemic. Please check your children's books at home and see if you have any from our library. You can return them to Christina Palmer. Thank you!