

# Good News

C O N N E L L S V I L L E P R E S B Y T E R I A N C H U R C H

## T H E M I N I S T E R ' S M U S I N G S

Luke 24:25–27

And [Jesus] said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

I can scarcely believe it's already time for Nativities and Advent! Planning is underway for music and the children's party and pageant. As we plan for the hustle and bustle of the season, don't forget to spend time preparing yourself for Christ's coming.

We have provided devotional booklets again this year. If you're not in the habit of spending time in scripture and prayer, these are a great way to give it a try for the month. There's a verse, a brief thought about the verse and a short prayer to get your devotional time started. The busier we get, the more important it is to spend time with the source of our life. The focus of the devotional book this year is "looking up". When we focus too much on this world, the world starts to pull us down. By focusing up, to God and to His coming in Christmas and the expectation of His second coming in glory, we can keep the pressures of this world in perspective.

The Apostle James tells us: *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.*

Spending time with God in Sunday School and worship, in daily devotions, and in small group studies keeps us plugged into His power and sustaining life. I have been surprised at the number of people who have told me they don't want to participate in Bible studies or devotions because they don't know enough. Yet if we don't read or study God's word, we'll never learn! I've been preaching through the Old Testament narrative of God's revelation of Himself through a series of covenants, and how Jesus brought that forward to teach about himself. This should provide a framework to understand the rest of the Bible story. (If you missed any of the series, you can listen to the messages on our website.)

I'd also like to challenge you to grow in your understanding of God's relationship with His people. I'll place a Bible reading plan in the narthex this month, so we can join together to read the Bible together during this next year – but this plan leaves out some of those books that tend to make people stop reading! For 6 months, I challenge you to read approximately 4 chapters a day with the rest of the congregation. We can't know where we fit in God's story if we don't know His story!



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*Rev. Suzanne*

Visit our website at [www.Connellsville-EPC.org](http://www.Connellsville-EPC.org)

# CHURCH CALENDAR

## WINTER 2015, 2016 EVENTS

### December

- Dec 5-6** Nativity display / *It's a Connellsville Christmas*  
**Dec 9** Movie: The Nativity, 6pm  
**Dec 12** Children's Christmas Party, 10am  
**Dec 14** Session meeting, 7pm  
**Dec 20** Children's Christmas Pageant during worship; light lunch following worship  
**Dec 24** Christmas Eve Service, 7pm  
**Dec. 25** Christmas Day



### January

- Jan. 3** Communion  
**Jan 6** Faith Finders resumes  
**Jan 11** Session meeting  
**Jan 17** Congregational Meeting

\* **No Ladies Lunches in December, January and February. They will resume in March**

### February

- Feb. 6** Session meeting  
**Feb 14** Communion  
**Feb 10** Ash Wednesday, 7pm  
**Feb 16** 1st Lenten Luncheon  
**Feb 24** 2nd Lenten Luncheon

### Sunday Schedule

**Adult Sunday School 9:45 am**  
**Youth Sunday School 9:45 am**  
**Worship 11:00am**

*For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6*

### Birthdays

- |   |                                      |                           |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dec. 1—Chuck Schmidt                        | Jan. 7—Jackie Miller                 | Feb. 19—Shawn Grimm       |
| Dec.16 —Scott Whetsel                       | Jan. 9—Carol Groff, Rachel Pastors   | Feb. 27—Sandy Brooks      |
| Dec. 19—Dylan Martin                        | Jan. 12—Audra McFadden               | Feb. 28—Bailey Rosensteel |
| Dec. 23—Marilyn Mitchell                    | Jan. 15—Bill Driscoll                |                           |
| Dec. 24—Janet Driscoll                      | Jan. 21—Stacie Tarr                  |                           |
| Dec. 27—Ashleigh Farrah                     | Jan. 30—Nick Tarr                    |                           |
| Dec. 28—Estella Grose                       | Feb. 4 —Tom Welch                    |                           |
| Jan. 2—Tommy Christopher, Haleigh Ferencuha | Feb. 5—Winifred Dilworth             |                           |
| Jan. 3—Mason O'Casek                        | Feb. 11—Scott Brooks, Addison Farrah |                           |
| Jan. 4—Danny Rosensteel                     | Feb. 13—Jean Whetsel                 |                           |

### Anniversaries

- Dec. 6—Shelly and Brian Hann  
 Feb. 5—Jenny and David O'Casek  
 Feb. 14—Suzanne and Neil Zampella  
 Feb. 22—Pat and John Arzbacher  
 Feb. 24—Sue and John Husband

*Members and Loved Ones who have joined the Church Eternal*



*Nancy Crislip Henry*



## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

### Faith Finders Starts Again January 6<sup>th</sup>

Please have your children and their friends join us for our Wednesday night Faith Finders program. Faith Finders is our mid-week youth program for school aged children. We have classes for the younger ones and a special class for our teens and pre-teens. We have fun, we pray for those in need, we sing and learn about Jesus and how to bring him into our children's daily life.

Dinner starts at 5:30 and our programs begin at 6:00. We wrap things up around 7:00. It's a great way to spend a Wednesday evening, so tell your friends, neighbors and co-workers to bring their children.

Faith Finders helps children strengthen their faith while forming friendships and having a great time!



### Children's Christmas Party

Saturday Dec. 12th

10 am — Noon

## UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

### ELEANOR HIXENBAUGH AND BARB STRINER

This summer the Fellowship Class went to Jennerstown's Mountain Playhouse to see "A Mighty Fortress is Our Church Basement", and the two ladies we are highlighting in this issue are definitely a big part of our "Ladies of the Church Basement" or anyplace else at Connellsville Presbyterian.

During our Apple Dumpling project, you will see Eleanor Hixenbaugh and Barb Striner at work in the basement every day during this important fund raiser. If we need to serve a funeral dinner or any church coffee hour or dinner, you can call upon Eleanor and Barb, and they are always willing to make something, to come and set up, to serve, and to clean up. Barb is a staple when it comes to preparing and serving snacks during our Bible School. All churches depend on the dependability of great ladies like Barb and Eleanor. Eleanor has even been called upon to play the piano during Worship if there is no substitute for Marilee.

Eleanor is the proud mother of daughter, Diane and son, Dave and equally proud grandmother of Brad and Evan. She is originally from Monongahela, but relocated in Connellsville when husband, Lou, accepted a position with Connellsville Savings. Eleanor's professional life involved working for the PA State Job Service from which she retired in 1991. Eleanor really enjoys attending "Silver Sneakers" where she gets a good physical workout. She likes to stay active, be with her family, go out to eat, etc. She is a faithful member of the Fellowship Class and this church. Eleanor has been to Israel, and we call upon her for eyewitness account of places we are studying.



Barb is also the proud mother of three son; Mark, Bobby, and Kevin. She has six grandchildren; Matthew, Megan, Justin, Jessica and Jacob plus two great grandchildren; Mackenzie and Westley. Barb and her husband, Bob, built a home on the family farm on Duck Pond Road. She lived near to her mother, Wilma Leighty, and together they celebrated Wilma's 100th birthday in August, 2013. Barb worked for West Penn Power as a key punch operator for several years until she returned home to care for her sons. After the sons were older she went to work at the local Dairy Queen and worked the night shift for 15 years. Barb said that she loved working there. Barb is a faithful member of the Fellowship Class and this church.

## **“Oh Come Let Us Adore Him”: December 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>**

Oh Come Let Us Adore Him nativity and angel display will be held again this year at our church. It's part of the annual *It's a Connellsville Christmas* and a special way to start your Christmas season. The display of the Nativity and Angels will be showed on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 am to 4 pm and Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> from Noon to 2 pm. We are in need of helpers on both days to serve punch and cookies or to greet the people touring our displays. We also need people to make cookies. Please contact Teri Montgomery or Nancy Luckey, or call the church office 724-628-4401 if you are able to help in any way. Donations will be accepted from visitors to “Oh Come Let Us Adore Him” and will benefit Alternatives.Yes Pregnancy Support Center.



## **Movie Night: Wednesday, December 9, 6:00 pm**

Everyone is invited to see the movie *The Nativity*.

## **Children's Christmas Party: Saturday, December 12 10:00am to noon**

Join us for a fun morning to celebrate Christmas with our youth.

## **Children's Christmas Pageant and Christmas Coffee Hour: Sunday December 20<sup>th</sup>**

Join us for the annual Children's Christmas Pageant at 11:00 am during worship. The children and teens will be doing Christmas readings, singing songs and a tableau. Immediately after, join us for a Christmas Coffee hour at noon for yummy treats and fellowship. It's a wonderful and meaningful way to take a break from the hustle and bustle of Christmas and to focus on the real meaning of Christmas.

**Mitten Tree**- At the end of November, an undecorated Christmas Tree will appear in the Narthex. This is to remind us to reach out to others in need as we celebrate the coming of the birth of Jesus Christ. Many of our school children will go to school without adequate clothing. We would like to give them a warm gift in the name of Jesus by filling up the Christmas Tree with mittens, hats, gloves and socks. In the past we have supplied local schools with these items so help the Faith Finders continue this tradition of helping others in need. Thank you.



## **CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS**

It's time again to order your Christmas Poinsettias! You can order them in red, white or pink and have them in honor or in memory of a special person or loved one. The poinsettias are \$9.00 each and orders need to be in by no later than Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

These beautiful Christmas flowers will be used to decorate the church for Christmas Eve service and may be picked up and taken home anytime after that service. If you wish your poinsettia to be donated to one of our shut-ins, please let the church know when you order. For more information, call the church office or speak to Nancy Luckey.



### **December Office Hours**

**Monday through Wednesday 8:00am to 2:00 pm**

**Office closed on Thursday and Friday**

**Office closed on December 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1**

**At any other time, please leave a message on the machine, we check it at least daily.**

## SESSION NEWS

As we end 2015, we look at how God has blessed Connellsville Presbyterian. We've moved to a new denomination, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church; we have moved forward with major repairs to our building; and we are looking forward to 2016.

This new beginning comes with a cost. We've been fortunate to have donors who assisted us with the costs of leaving the old denomination, both in our legacy endowments, and in a special donation. However, as we move forward with the repairs to our doors and other areas of the building, we must look to our members, not just in *special* giving, but in our weekly tithes and offerings that keep the lights on, the building warm, and the utilities paid.

We did not run a dedicated Stewardship Drive this fall. Many of the programs available are expensive, and we want to be good stewards of our resources. Instead of a commercial drive, we're asking that each family pick up a pledge card from the table in the Narthex, and make a pledge to support the Operational Budget for 2016.

In addition, now that we're in the EPC, we have a *Per Member Asking* instead of a *Per Capita* collection. The majority of the funds given to the EPC goes to support missionaries abroad and church developments here in the US. Last year the EPC commissioned over 25 new missionaries! There are over 130 EPC missionaries throughout the world, primarily in under-served areas like Sierra Leone.

The *Per Member Asking* for the EPC as of the date of this publication is not yet known, but we are expecting a request of \$25.00 per member. The Presbytery of the Alleghenies asks for an additional \$12.50 per member. This goes to assist other churches in the Presbytery with funds for training, regional church planting, and the Presbytery's ongoing mission in Sierra Leone.

**The total *Per Member Asking* for 2016 will be \$36.50 per member.** The Stewardship & Finance Committee again thanks all the congregation for their faithful support of CPC.

**The members of Session ask for your prayers and support during the months of January and February, as we study and prepare for our examination before the EPC Presbytery.**



### LENTEN LUNCHEONS

The Connellsville Area Ministerial Association is once again sponsoring the Lenten Luncheon Services, which will be held every Tuesday during Lent, from February 16th until March 15th. We have hosted these luncheons in our church for the last several years and each week, different churches of the community will be providing a wonderful lunch and a message from different Pastors. The first luncheon will be Tuesday, February 16, from noon to 1pm and the wonderful chefs from our church will be providing the lunch. Reverend Suzanne will be speaking at the second lunch on February 23rd. Look for the complete schedule in the church bulletin. Come and join our fellow Connellsville Christians for a time of unity, challenge and friendship as we enter into the Lenten Season.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
WWW.CONNELLSVILLE-EPC.ORG

Connellsville Presbyterian Church  
701 S. Pittsburgh St.  
Connellsville PA, 15425

### OUR CHURCH CONNECTION TO *IT'S A CONNELLSVILLE CHRISTMAS*

How do major events in a community get their beginnings? They often start with one event. Such is the case for *It's A Connellsville Christmas*. Teri Montgomery, then Chairman of our Outreach Committee, suggested that the church sponsor a Nativity Display and invite the public to come to Connellsville Presbyterian Church and enjoy the different ways that artists devise to capture the miracle and joy of the Christmas Season. Teri, Nancy Luckey, Shirley Rusnack, Mary Lou Welch, and Eleanor Hixenbaugh put their heads together and went searching for Nativity displays.



The first year that this event took place there were 81 Nativities open to our church and the public in December, 2008. We had a person who played the piano providing background music as the public viewed the amazing and varied interpretation of "Oh, Come Let Us Adore Him". For the 2009 display, Rev. Marnie suggested adding Angels to our event. During this display, the idea of using our event and getting other churches and organizations involved doing something special for Christmas might lead to Connellsville becoming a Christmas destination point. Those discussing this possibility included: Michael Edwards, Dan Cocks, Debby Mullaney and Karen Hechler. The first "It's A Connellsville Christmas" happened in December, 2010. We are now working on the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual celebration. The event has grown until it encompasses the entire city of Connellsville.

What started out as a one church celebration of the true meaning of Christmas with 81 Nativities now has grown to around 300 Nativities. It has become the impetus for an entire city celebration of Christmas. Sometimes small events inspire others to create major happenings. Lots of people are working hard on this city wide event, but Connellsville Presbyterian Church was the inspiration for what has followed in Connellsville. When I go to the planning meetings of *It's A Connellsville Christmas*, I know where it all started.