

# The Good News

DECEMBER 2015

For the members and friends of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford

## FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN-CELL

### Lectionary for the month of December

#### 2nd Sunday in Advent December 6

Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 1:69-79

Philippians 1:3-11

Luke 3:1-6

#### 3rd Sunday of Advent December 13

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

#### 4th Sunday in Advent December 20

Micah 5:2-5a

Luke 1:46b-55 or

Psalm 80:1-7

Hebrews 10:5-10

Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

#### Christmas Eve December 24

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

#### Christmas Day December 25—Dawn

Isaiah 62:6-12

Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20

#### Day

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalm 98

Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)

John 1:1-14

#### 1st Sunday After Christmas

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52

It is coming this December! And I don't mean Christmas.

"Along time ago in a galaxy far, far away ..."

Written in blue against the blackness of space, *these words* pop up at the beginning of every *Star Wars* movie, signifying that we are about to watch a story transcending time and space. They first appeared in 1977, when the original *Star Wars* film hit the screen, followed by *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*.

In 1999, a set of three prequels was launched, and now -- after a long wait -- the first of three sequels is set to be released: *The Force Awakens*. It promises to be a blockbuster film released during Advent, with many a matinee attendee between Christmas and New Year's Day. Go to Target or the Lego Store now and you see these places overflowing with *Star Wars* stuff, just in time for Christmas. I found tons of *Star Wars* Advent calendars, but none with shepherds, Wiseman, Mary and Joseph or manger.

Set 30 years after the events of *Return of the Jedi*, this movie features fresh characters alongside the heroes of previous *Star Wars* installments -- Luke Skywalker, Han Solo and Princess Leia. You'll also see X-wing fighters, R2-D2, light sabers and Chewbacca. They'll all be back. Actually I watched granddaughter Haley go trick-or-treating as Princess Leia so interest is piquing among the very young. And, of course, you'll experience "the Force." This is a power defined by Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi as "an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us; it binds the galaxy together." The Force has a light side and a dark side, and can be used for good or for evil.

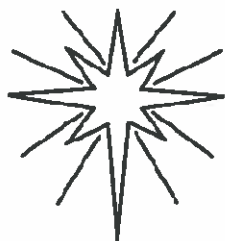
"The Force is strong in my family," said Luke Skywalker in the trailer for *The Force Awakens* that I downloaded on my computer. "My father has it. I have it. My sister has it. You have that power, too."

An even stronger force appeared when John the Baptist preached to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him in the River Jordan. "You brood of vipers!" he shouted. "Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" He described the people as poisonous snakes, slithering and escaping danger. John encouraged his hearers to "bear fruits worthy of repentance." John challenged folks to focus on the right side of the force and use it for good instead of evil.



Such a message fits the world of *The Force Awakens* as it reminds us that *the greatest evil is the evil that comes from within*, not the evil that attacks us from outside. A fan of *Star Wars*, Bill Reidway says that "any one of us -- even the best of us -- can give in to fear, anger and hatred if we're not vigilant; those are powerful emotions that can blur our senses and cause us to lose sight of what true goodness is."

Goodness doesn't come from being a branch on Abraham's family tree. By the grace of God goodness comes from the doing of good. John warned people to change and avoid Darth Vader like doom. He fell from being noble because he misplaced the value that goodness is expressed through goodness and affection for others. Vader wasn't always this way; he started out as Anakin Skywalker -- a generous, loyal, compassionate boy, so powerful in the Force that many thought he was "The Chosen One" of ancient prophecy. Anakin used the Force to do great good as he grew up, fighting for peace and justice while protecting the innocent and opposing the wicked.



But Anakin lost his way. Over time, he became obsessed with his own passions and fears that they controlled his behavior and breached his empathy. He believed himself to be the wisest, the strongest and the purest; and, finally, he allowed his own ambitions to justify evil over good.

The crowds around John asked, "What then should we do?" It is a contemporary question really. Although John spoke of change, he knew that another would come. I remember, and perhaps you do, too that there was a show-down between Luke and Darth Vader. Instead of relying on violence to defeat violence" Luke reacts with compassion for Vader -- he responds with love. Not an abstract or ceremonial love, but a concrete, self-sacrificial love for the human being that Darth Vader is, even with all his faults."

"There has been an awakening," says a character in *The Force Awakens*. How I wish that there would be something similar within each of us. Let us not be so enamored with *Star Wars*, but like those who were wise so long ago, follow the Star to the manger and see there the power of God.

*Bruce*

**THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS CAN BE PAINFUL** ~ The joy of Christmas can turn into a time of painful loneliness and emptiness for those who have suffered a loss or who are going through a difficult time. But help is available. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide confidential, one-to-one, Christian care. They will listen, care, encourage, pray with and for you, and support you through the holidays and as long as your need persists. If you or someone you know is hurting, find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our Stephen Leaders: Jane Hunter, Alice O'Dwyer, Barbara Smith, Dick Sprenkle or Carol Tiemann to learn more about Stephen Ministry. **Our Stephen Ministers are there to care!**



#### **UPCOMING DEACON FUN ACTIVITIES**

**GARDEN CLUB** – December 1 – meet at church at noon to car pool to Oke Kee Art Gallery, 2 Lehigh Street, Honeoye Falls. RSVP Claudia 474-3135 or email.

## **HAM SUPPER ON DECEMBER 6**

Join us for the Ham Supper at 5:00 PM, followed by a Christmas Sing-Along at 6:30 PM. There will be faith, fun and fellowship as well as a delicious meal served with a delectable assortment of home-made cookies and punch.

**SH-H-H! This is a secret!** There will be a surprise visit from an important someone from "Way up North!"



## **Come and Anticipate the Season of Hope with Those on a New Journey**

*1st Presbyterian of Pittsford will be hosting the New Journey Christmas Celebration for children and their mothers, mentors and other family members on Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30 PM.*



New Journey, a program of the Judicial Process Commission, provides support to empower female ex-offenders to lead healthy life styles and to become self-sufficient tax paying citizens. 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian of Pittsford is a sponsoring congregation of New Journey through the Presbytery.

The New Journey empowers women to:

- Lead a healthy and stable lifestyle
- Reestablish relationships with children and partners.
- Link with organizations that will provide enrichment to families and children
- Obtain safe and affordable housing.
- Enroll in further schooling including GED, high school or post-secondary training or college
- Become economically independent through employment and be in charge of their choices and lives.
- Break the cycle of poverty and reduce recidivism

Lee Fox will be coordinating the party and she would love various kinds of assistance: cooking, clean-up, child care, games for the kids, table decorations, music offerings and anything else that you think would be festive. All those who are young and young-at-heart, please contact her at [lee.freeman.fox@gmail.com](mailto:lee.freeman.fox@gmail.com) or at 585-261-7092.

**STEWARDSHIP REPORT** ~ Through November 10, a total of 182 commitment cards were received representing \$459,000. Of those, 13 commitments were new, and nearly 40% of those making repeat commitments intend to increase their giving an average of 18% above their 2015 promises. This is a good start!! For the entire 2015 Stewardship Campaign we received 279 commitments representing \$625,000. Thank you to all who have pledged your support! We welcome commitment cards others of you will be providing, whether you pledged last year or not, as your participation in any amount will help us to meet or expand our ministry and mission in 2016.



## News from the Nursery School

Once again it is that busy, joyful time of year! The preschool children are making gifts for their parents, learning how to give to others less fortunate and enjoying the gifts of the season. Beginning December 16 if you are a First Presbyterian Church member and you have a child preparing for preschool, you have first preference from then until December 31. to register your child for the upcoming school year. Please come see me in my office in the preschool for a registration packet, they will be available starting December 1. We wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and many blessings in the coming year. Thank you for all your support and as always, please come visit!



Teresa Zatyko, Director PCNS

## FPCP CONCERT SERIES 2015-2016

This year marks the tenth year of concerts in our sanctuary.

The 2015-2016 Series offerings are:

The U of R Choral Extravaganza  
Bruce Frank, Organist  
Concentus Women's Chorus

Sunday February 28, 2016 at 3:00 pm  
Sunday April 17, 2016 at 3:00 pm  
Sunday May 15, 2016 at 3:00 pm

You are invited to take advantage of the superb musical offerings in our own church



**SANTA IN THE SANCTUARY:** Join St. Nicholas in our Sanctuary Saturday December 5 anytime between 10 -11:30am. Share the historical roots of his servant leadership, take your own Christmas Card pictures, and revel in the wonder of God's generosity. Everyone is invited to join us as individual schedules permit. If you have questions, please contact Carrie Mitchell at 586-5688x32 or [cnm@pittsfordpres.org](mailto:cnm@pittsfordpres.org) HO HO HO!

**An anonymous "star"** in our congregation made a generous contribution to our Unfunded Projects list. This gift will enhance mission and ministry of Jesus Christ for generations to come. "Thank you, Lord" for the light of this "Star!" More unfunded projects can be found on our website by selecting the "Giving" tab on the bottom left of our website page and then finding "Unfunded Projects List" on the top of the next web page. Clicking on it will provide you with the list. In this season of Thanksgiving, we give thanks for generous stars!



### Christmas pageant

Again this year the children will join the choir to present a Cradling the Arts type of worship service on December 20. The children will dress up as Christmas characters by grade. The pre-k and younger kids will be sheep, k-1 grades will be angels, 2-3 grades will be shepherds, and 4-5 grades will be Mary, Joseph, wise people, and towns people. All costumes are provided during Sunday school.

Children are invited to volunteer to read prayers and poetry during the 10 am worship service on December 20.

### On November 29th children are invited to worship with adults.

Several times a year children are invited to stay in church to experience all of the worship service with their family. These times are typically around holidays. We hope that children can learn and experience the love of worship as they grow up. On these days there is no formal Sunday school, however there will be an alternative worship space in Fellowship hall that day if children choose not to stay in the Sanctuary.

### CHRISTMAS PRESENTS WITH A HIGHER PURPOSE

Wondering what present to give that person who has everything? How about an animal!

On Sundays in Advent, after church services, you can go to Fellowship Hall and purchase an animal (or a share) . By contributing any amount, you will receive a card made by our Sunday School children to announce this gift. By this simple act, you will be contributing to the 16th annual Heifer Fair, our Sunday School mission project.

And your tax deductible gift will help families in developing countries have sustainable food and resources to educate their children. So how about a sheep for your shy knitting aunt? Or a pig for your loving mother-in-law? Or a camel for your cousin? Start your list now!

## Christian Education

### Upcoming Events

Men's Prayer Breakfast	7:00 am 12/6
Mary Weller Circle	12/14 11:30 am
Evening Circle	Next Month
Naomi Circle	12/7 12:00pm
Anthony Circle	12/2 9:30 am
Not so Basic Bible study	Mondays 7:30 pm
Prayer Support Group	Monday 11:00 am
Wednesday Evening Book Club	Wed. 7:00 monthly
Lectionary Study	Weds. 7:15 pm
Men's Ecumenical Group	Thursdays 7:15 am
Adult Study	Sundays 9:45 am

### Upcoming for Logos:

Dec 2

Love: Hope, Joy, Peace

Dec 9

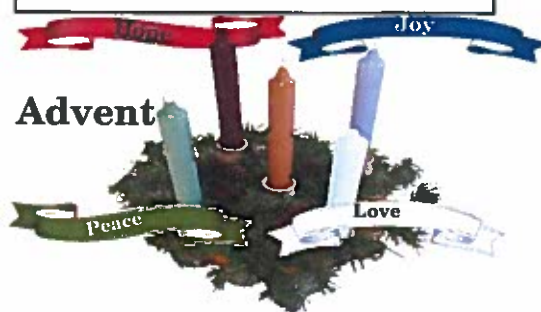
Sing : Christmas Caroling

Dec 16

CHOIR ONLY

Jan 6

Epiphany: New Beginnings



## Upcoming Events

November 22-Advent Brunch and Asbury Joint Youth Event

December 6-Ham Supper

December 8-JPC Christmas Party

December 11-Scrooge Party

SO-SO Gatherings—December 20

LOGOS Gatherings—December 2 and 9



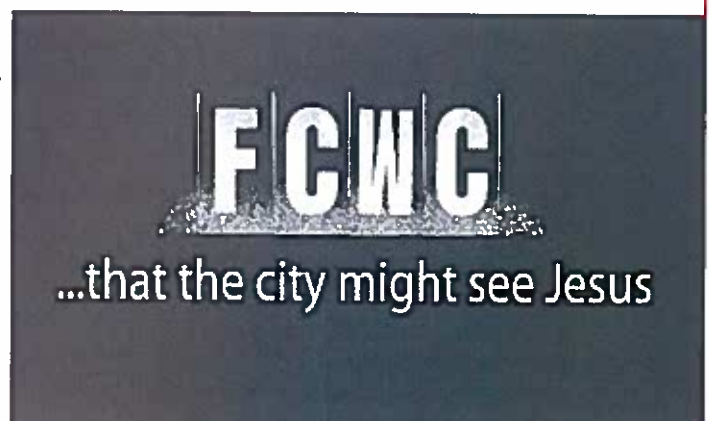
## Youth Triennium 2016

Coming up in July 2016. Presbyterian Youth from around the globe come together at Purdue University in Indiana for 5 days of Worship, companionship and Loving through God. Dates are July 19th-23rd.



## Flower City Work Camp

Dates are March 28th-April 1st  
Come together in our very own Rochester with youth from around the city to help make it an overall better place! Everyone can make a difference!





## **UPDATE ON ADAM POLLOCK AND MISSION WORK AT INSTEP HOME IN KENYA**

Adam has been extremely busy since returning to Instep in early August. As soon as he returned the two directors, Jeff and Carla left to return to the States for their son's wedding leaving him to oversee the running of the home by himself. Carla returned on October 2 and Jeff on October 28. During the time they were gone, Adam was covering for them, Terry Kiser a member of the board was there to cover some of Adam's tasks.



They have started a new program at Instep called Stepping Stones. In Kenya special needs children are totally unwanted and uncared for, none of the other homes have the ability to care for them. Four of these children were already at Instep, with the start of the new program the number has doubled to eight and more on the way. To accommodate the new program the pre-school class was moved to the school building and Adam had to oversee the construction of a new class room. Also water had to be run to the former preschool room and a fenced yard made so the special needs children would be secure.

Adam continues to push to get a waste treatment plant built and operational as the septic system they have has failed. He identified a company out of Florida that has designed a system and has a team in Kenya doing installations. He has run estimates, had a representative of the company out to go over his plans, and with Jeff's return has been able to go visit a site where a system has been installed and is in operation. Most of the needed funds have been raised and he hopes to start construction soon.

Bill Pollock will once again be leading a dental team to Instep in early July. Following him, Ron Pollock will be leading a team from First Presbyterian Church leaving on or around July 15.

The project for the second team has not been identified yet as there are so many projects that Adam is working on at this time. As the time gets nearer we will know better where the most help is needed. However, with getting visas and work papers as difficult to get as it is in Kenya right now, we need to identify the people going and to start the process. Two years ago when we went we used an agent and the cost was a little high. This time Adam has offered to act as our agent, but will need extra time to get the job done.

Should you have any interest in joining the team, visiting Kenya and Instep or helping Adam to better care for the children at the home please contact Ron Pollock at 585-455-0000 or email at [Ronaldjpollock@gmail.com](mailto:Ronaldjpollock@gmail.com).

## **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**



**ANTHONY CIRCLE** ~ will be moving their regular meeting to 9:30 am on the third Wednesday of the month starting in January. We usually gather in the church kitchen and proceed from there. However, our meeting for November is to prepare and serve the food for the Advent Brunch. We will be in the Church Kitchen 10 am – 1 pm on Saturday November 21, and 8 am – 11:30 am on Sunday November 22. Our meeting in December is a Christmas Brunch on Wednesday December 2 at 9:30 am at the home of Anne Ferris. New members are always welcome. Please contact Janette Henderson for more information.

**MARY WELLER** ~ will meet on Monday, December 14 at 11:30 AM in Fellowship Hall. Please bring your lunch and least coin and enjoy the fellowship and help work on a new blanket.. All women of the church are invited to attend. If not a regular member, please contact Shirley Lawrence.

**NAOMI CIRCLE** ~ will be meeting for their Christmas luncheon at Monroe's Restaurant, 3001 Monroe Ave., on December 7 at noon. Don't forget to bring your gifts for the residents of Grace House! Your generosity is ALWAYS appreciated. Dan Traina will join us with a brief history of Grace House.

**EVENING CIRCLE'S** ~ next meeting will be on January 25, 2016. Where we will continue our study on 'Why Jesus Crossed the Road'. All women are welcome.

### **ASTONISHING, CARING WOMEN CREATING GIFTS THAT SHARE GOD'S LOVE!!!**

This mission is done quietly-except when we drop a stitch or make a mistake that requires ripping out six rows.

The Knitting Group meets once a month in Room 200 from 11-1:30 or whenever you can make it. Our next get-together will be November 24.

Gifts have been given to: Calvary St. Andrews, Cameron, Kirkhaven, World Vision' Guidepost (children's sweaters), and Strong Hospital (infant and preemie hats).

**69 HATS, 50 PAIRS OF MITTENS, 15 SCARVES  
46 CHILDREN'S SWEATERS, 47 INFANT/  
PREEMIE HATS  
2 PAIR BOOTIES**



Since the beginning of the Prayer Shawl/Lap Robe ministry in 2008, we have delivered 92 to members of our congregation.

Many thanks to generous women!! See you November 24.

Questions? Call Kay 385-9807 Donated yarn appreciated.



## MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

**Marshall and Sandy Shear** were married here in our Sanctuary in July and give thanks for God leading them to one another. Many of you might recognize Sandy Lindsay Shear as the owner of Sandy's barbershop. She cut Marsh's hair for years. With the passing of their respective spouses, they discovered that they loved one another's company and that they wanted to formalize that love here in our church. They join by reaffirmation of faith.

**Anthony and Sandy Seacat** have been married for almost 24 years and are graced by three children: Stacy, Tony and Cassie. Sandy has a masters in human resources and is applying that in her daily work as an HR manager. Anthony has also found work in Rochester as a manufacturing manager. They are transferring their membership from the 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church of Eden, NC.

**Tracey and J.W. Krimbill** have been married for 34 years. They both love to golf and enjoy long walks with their 3 beloved West Highland White Terriers. They also love to renovate homes (mostly their own) and are both quite crafty. They were drawn to the incredible warmth and commitment of this congregation and are transferring their membership from Asbury Methodist.

**Stephen and Caroline Hill** have returned home to Rochester and currently live in Brighton with their lab, Gracie. Stephen is a faculty member at Nazareth College and Caroline is a financial advisor at Brighton Securities. Stephen is a member of the bell choir and both anticipate becoming more involved as they transfer their memberships from Third and Twelve Corners respectively.

**OPTIMISTS** ~ On Friday evening December 11 we will celebrate the Christmas season by joining our very own Director of Music James Douthit. Christmas Carols deepen our experience of the season, provide memories that last forever, and give us a meaningful way to celebrate together. James will examine the history of Christmas Carols and we will explore the background of some of our favorite carols, hear some of our favorites played on the piano, and sing some new and familiar carols together.



**Joy to the World!**

We will gather at 5:30 and a chicken dinner with all the extras will be served at 6 pm. I have it on good authority dessert will not be fruit cake. Please bring your own table service and a non perishable item for the Pittsford Food Cupboard. Tickets will be available for \$10 per person in Fellowship Hall following both services on November 29 and December 6 and in the office during business hours. Come and bring a friend! By chance if you receive a fruitcake during the holiday season I have discovered two new uses; use slices to balance the wobbly kitchen table or use as speed bumps in your neighborhood.

**THE OFFICE WILL BE ORDERING** ~ new offering boxes for 2016. If you are not currently using offering envelopes and would like to use them, please let the office know and we will order them for you. If you have been using them and wish not to do so this year, please let us know as well.