



LISTEN to *The ChurchMouse*

*New Scotland Presbyterian Church
December 2022*

"Original Landlord Still Offering Sanctuary"



The Message From Above

by the Rev. Holly Cameron

Every year we hear the grumbling over how early Christmas appears in the stores. This year, in addition to seeing Christmas displays up before Halloween, I noticed that Christmas movies and specials started running on TV the day after Halloween. Christmas is often called "the most wonderful time of the year," so I'm not surprised that people long to extend the season.

This year seems particularly challenging with the "triple-demic;" lingering supply chain and staffing issues; and costs rising. After nearly three years of having our normal life disrupted, it's no wonder we are looking for a season of cheer and peace.

I'm reminded of the shepherds in the Christmas story. In Luke 2, we hear that an angel of the Lord comes to the shepherds and says, "Do not be afraid." The ancient world was always on the verge of chaos and violence. The appearance of this angel meant that some new disruption was coming. Fear is a perfectly natural reaction. The shepherds are not the only ones to feel it.

Mary and Joseph are afraid when they learn she is with child. Herod is afraid of the infant Jesus whom the magi recognize as a new king. Simon is afraid when Jesus calls him to fish for people. The disciples are afraid when Jesus calms the storm, when he predicts his death, when they run away after his arrest, and when the women tell them about the empty tomb on Easter morning. The religious leaders are afraid of the way Jesus challenges the interpretation

of laws, and of the crowds he attracts. Even Pilate's wife is afraid of the dream she has when Jesus is on trial.

Fear of chaos and violence is natural, but it is ironic that often the way we respond to fear – avoidance of chaos and violence -- can actually contribute to the chaos and lead to more violence. At the beginning of the story, Herod

reacts by killing all the children under two, hoping to prevent a battle with a new king trying to take over. At the end, the authorities kill Jesus, because they fear the disruption he creates.

It is this cycle, that begins in fear and ends in violence, that the gospel sees so clearly.

Our modern world is not so different: chaos and violence are prominent in the stories we hear every day. We live in fear of something terrible striking our loved ones. I think the message of the media is supposed to be something like "forewarned is forearmed," as if we can predict every possible bad thing and find a way to avoid them all. But our fears usually lead us to build more walls and to lash out at others assuming everyone else is a threat.

The angel's message, "Do not be afraid," is a way of saying, "Do not be afraid of all the messages you hear about chaos and violence and disruption." The angel's message is not just one more message among so many others. "Do not be afraid" is the message above all others. From the angel's announcement, to the characters of the nativity, to Jesus coaxing his disciples to faith, to the angels at the tomb, to the



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New Hymnal Under Consideration

Congregational Life Committee, at its last meeting, began to consider updating to a newer hymnal. The Glory to God hymnals were made available about ten years ago. At that time, I wasn't interested in these hymnals because I was concerned that many hymns within were a single line of melody instead of traditional four-part harmony.

Since then, I have played music for other churches who use Glory to God, and I'm pleased with the number of familiar and favorite hymns. "They'll know we are Christians by our Love", and "Abide with Me" are examples. I prefer using Glory to God hymnals when selecting music for worship service, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and funeral service.

In our current hymnals (The Presbyterian Hymnal), Hymns 158-258 are based on Psalms. We rarely, if ever, incorporate these in our worship service. In Glory to God, this section is removed, though a few are dispersed throughout. Glory to God boasts 200 more hymns than The Presbyterian Hymnal.

David Vredenburg was our guest musician this past summer. He is the coordinator of substitutes for Eastern NY American Organist Guild. He agreed to cover for me, assuming we were using Glory to God hymnals. Fortunately, those Sunday hymns happened to be in both Hymnals, identical. I can't remember the last time I saw The Presbyterian Hymnal outside of our church.

I predict our congregation will like the Glory to God hymnals. I expect we will enjoy singing our usual hymns, along with some classics not featured in our current Hymnal. We would love to hear your feedback as we consider this change. There are copies of the Glory to God hymnal in the fellowship if you would like to see one.

~Ryan James Dwyer, Music Director

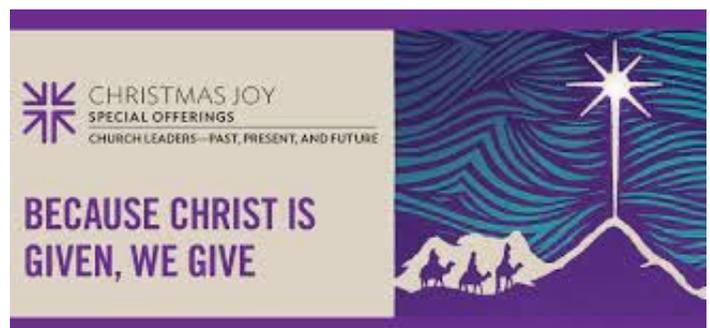
October Clothing Drive

The Mission Committee would like to thank all who participated in a very successful clothing drive. Two large car loads of clothes were taken to the Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless in Albany and additional clothes were taken to the Patients-in-Need Closet at St. Peters Hospital.



Our December Mission

This month's Mission Collection will be the Christmas Joy Offering. One half of the funds collected will go to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions of PCUSA, providing critical financial support to church workers, retired, present and future and their families. One half will go to Presbyterian-related schools, equipping communities of color, offering students the means for a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the church and the world for years to come.





Looking for Hope by Larry Deyss, Pastor in the Pew

We are creatures who look for hope. Indeed without hope it is nearly impossible for us to go on living with any sense of meaning, joy or peace. Hope is what keeps us going. If someone asks us if we have hope, we might stop and add up the pluses and minuses and if the pluses outweigh the minuses, then we will say we have hope. Hope can fluctuate from day to day depending upon the time and the context of the moment. Hope can be a rather mercurial and fragile thing.

The biblical understanding of hope seems to be more enduring because it is not based on the thoughts, feelings and conditions of the moment. Biblical hope is based on God being God, and that God is one who acts in the midst of the world.

That is what we will be celebrating in these coming weeks, beginning with Christ the King Sunday, followed by Advent, Christmas, and on to the season of Epiphany. As St. John wrote, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)

Though the darkness of the world is often strong and evidence of evil is ever present, we see Christ as King. Christ in his life, death and resurrection demonstrates the power of God at work, in him overcoming the powers of darkness. Through him, God was made manifest to

the world, giving us hope for our life in this world and beyond.

Biblical hope is relational. You will note that hope is often mentioned along with faith and love, which are also relational terms. St. Paul speaks of Faith, Hope and Love. He says love is the greater because it is love of God that strengthens us so we can have faith (trust), and that faith makes it possible to have hope, because our hope is not grounded in the immediacy of the moment, or the context of the day, but is grounded in the one who is King over all things.

Granted, oftentimes we look at the world and the human condition and wonder, "Where is God?" Read the Psalms and you will oftentimes find the writer pouring forth, from the depth of his heart and soul, questions of "Where is God?" As the verses unfold, the same writer has drilled down through the questions to the bedrock of faith (trust) in God and the psalmist closes with a renewed affirmation of the power and sovereignty of God in which the psalmist feels sustained.

God is our strength and source of faith, hope and love. Engaging with the psalms, and other texts, we realize that in our searching to find hope, we ourselves are found. In that realization we are aware that God is present, gifting us with strength, hope and love.



*We will celebrate Christmas
with worship at 7:00 pm
on Christmas Eve and 10:00 am
on Christmas Day.*

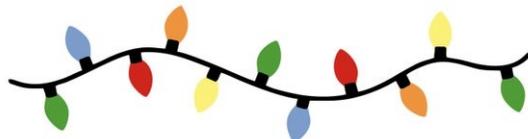




The Friendship Singers of Delmar are Back!

We're pleased to announce that The Friendship Singers will be performing a Christmas concert here at the church on Wednesday, December 14 at 7:00 pm. The director of this popular local women's group is Marie Liddle; piano accompaniment, Peg Dorgan. They're very good at spreading a little Christmas cheer with old favorites!

If you can't make this concert, they are also performing at the Delmar Reformed Church (DRC) at 386 Delaware Avenue on Thursday, December 22 at 7 pm.



New Scotland Cemetery Assn. Seeks New Secretary

Arlene Herzog, Secretary/Treasurer of The New Scotland Cemetery Association, is looking to retire from her volunteer position as of May 1, 2023. According to Herzog, "It is time for the next generation, or at least someone under the age of seventy, to become more involved. Our board consists of three people over the age of eighty. We need younger people who are comfortable with social media platforms.

"In 2009 our cemetery, along with the Presbyterian Church, was added to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. We need to continue to preserve our historic cemetery." If you are interested, contact Arlene at 518-439-1559.

Stewardship Letters Have Been Mailed

The Finance Committee mailed out the letter for 2023 Stewardship pledges on November 17.

We are asking Church Members and Friends to consider the question "Why is New Scotland Presbyterian Church important to YOU?" as a guide to your financial contribution to our Church. In the mailing we have included more detail on facts and figures than usual to explain the needs of our church. But, appreciating the value of the church in our lives is really a question for our hearts. Facts and figures don't solely move a person to give to the church. Contemplating the blessings of a church that nurtures our spiritual lives is the real spark.

Over four Sundays there will be very short comments by some members about what the New Scotland Presbyterian Church means to the speaker. Our hope is that these personal witnesses may speak to your own heart as you think about your 2023 financial pledge to our church.



*Stewardship
Committee*



*Scott & Shirley Wright, John Griffin, Sandra Vosburgh,
and Jim Nicholson*

Celebrating Milestone Membership Anniversaries — Again!

Our church celebrated the milestone anniversaries of some of our church family on Sunday, October 30. We opened the morning's service with the acknowledgement and anniversary certificates for members who have reached their 40th and 30th years at Presbyterian Church in New Scotland. Kudos to Sandra Vosburgh and Bonnie and John Griffin upon reaching their 40th year of membership, and 30th year memberships were reached by Shirley and Scott Wright, and by Leah and Jim Nicholson! Congratulations to our celebrants!

Congregational Life Committee Update

The Congregational Life Committee met on November 27th to discuss a few issues.

We have finalized our membership rolls for the year and will forward that list to the Finance Committee to review. In addition, we discussed the possibility of purchasing new hymnals and the role that our committee might take in that event. We have about six copies for members to look through if they are interested in doing so. We thank Bonnie O'Shea for representing our church at the Community Thanksgiving Service on November 23. It was good to worship with our neighbors and we heard lots of positive feedback. And lastly, we are planning to celebrate one more church membership anniversary. We hope to do so in January.

Remembering Jean Paton Warren

We held a memorial service for Jean Warren on Saturday, December 3 at 12:00 pm here at the church, followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall. Jean sang in our choir for many years. She died in March 2020, and we are honored that we could host this service in her memory.

Born on December 20, 1922 in Alton, IL, she was the daughter of the late Herbert and Helen Gibson Paton. Jean's life was full of music. She grew up in Wood River, IL and was graduated from Shurtleff College, receiving a bachelor's degree in music. She then received a fellowship to Julliard Graduate School and moved to New York City.

After graduation, she auditioned and was accepted as a soprano with the Robert Shaw Choral performing around the country. She sang with Shaw until the choral was disbanded. She then met and married her soulmate and eventually moved to the Albany area. She continued to sing at Temple Beth Emeth and St. Andrew's Church while caring for home and family, and then at New Scotland Presbyterian Church.

She loved nature, enjoyed drawing, traveling, writing poetry, playing the piano, and opera. She was a member of the PEO Sisterhood for 75 years.

She is survived by her daughter Julie Kinley of Glenmont; her brother Herbert Paton of Colorado, and many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and nephews.



Prayer List

The prayer list is maintained by the Deacons. If you have questions about anyone on the list, or would like to add or remove someone from the list, contact Tamara Shaw. Call or text 518-573-7736 or email, CliftonRun@gmail.com.

Dick Barts

(The Dwyer's friend)

Laurel & Mark Beavers

The Rev. George Blakesley

(Johnstown pastor)

Melanie Thornton Capraro

(Karen & Tim Thornton's daughter)

Danny Carroll

(Chris Gordon's brother)

Linda Caruso

(Tamara Shaw's friend)

Randy Craft

(Debbie Craft's husband)

Dot Geyer

(Judy Riopelle's friend)

Billy Hauf

(Mary-Jean Riley's partner)

Joe Huth

Stephen Kohler

(Dorothy Kohler's son)

Aidan Lawson

(Robin Shufelt's friend)

Michael Manss

(Robin Shufelt's friend)

Stephanie Markus

(Robin Shufelt's friend)

Dorothy Matthews

Gerald Minor

(Joyce Schork's brother)

Vickie Richeson

(Mary-Jean Riley and Gene Urgento's sister)

Shirley Wright

Euni Yang

(Pastor Charlie Yang's wife)

Laity Sunday

The Congregational Life Committee and the entire congregation would like to thank all of the participants of Laity Sunday on November 20, especially to our youngest members who took on speaking roles in front of everyone! Thank you to the Sunday School students McKinley Riedy, Matthew Nopper-Shatraw, and Mariah Miller for leading us in the Exchange of Peace, the Call to Worship and the Prayer for Illumination.

We would also like to thank Homer Warner for both opening the morning with the Greetings and Welcome and closing the service with the Benediction, Sandy Warner for Celebrations and Concerns, Debbie Perez for leading us in both the Invitation to Confession and the Prayer of Confession, Peg Throop for reading the Old Testament lesson, Bonnie O'Shea for reading the Epistle lesson and sharing the Children's Sermon with the children, Corinne Weeks for reading the Gospel lesson, Sarita Winchell for sharing a Minute for Stewardship, the Invitation to Offering, and the Prayer of Dedication, and Margaret Ewart for leading us in the Lord's Prayer, in both English and Welsh!

And we have a special thank you to Christine Cameron, Dorothy Kohler, and Robin Hull-Pease for sharing personal reflections with our congregation.

It was a lovely service!





December Birthdays

Albert Miller	12/1	Robin Hull-Pease	12/24
Bruce Thornton	12/3	Harry Thornton.....	12/26
Tom DeLorenzo	12/3	Mackenzie Blake.....	12/28
Sean Gordon.....	12/8	Zachary Thornton.....	12/28
David Miller	12/10	Deborah Blakely.....	12/30
Mariah Rose Miller	12/16	Richard Von Haugg.....	12/31
Jeremy Gordon	12/13	Patti DeLorenzo	12/31
Liz Kirk	12/13		
Judy Riopelle	12/19		
Ryan Dwyer	12/21		

December Anniversary

Karen & Timothy Thornton, 12/20/69

Pastor's Column *(continued from page 1)*

mysterious conversations with the risen Christ, it all begins and ends with, "Do not be afraid."

And the angel said unto them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" And it came to pass, when the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go now to Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." (Luke 2:10-15)

~Blessings and Peace, +Holly

Can you Guess Who?!





Songs of the Season

Friday, December 9 at 7:30 pm, The Egg.
See John Griffin for group tickets costing \$18.



Merry Christmas



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Holiday Hours

The church office will be closed December 26-30

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