



## **LISTEN** to *The ChurchMouse*

*New Scotland Presbyterian Church*

*January 2024*

*"Original Landlord Still Offering Sanctuary"*



### **"A GUIDING WORD FOR A NEW YEAR"** by *Pastor Holly Cameron*

**A**t our worship on January 1 of last year, everyone was given a unique "star word" to use as a focal point for their faith journey through 2023. We were invited to place our star word somewhere we would see it regularly throughout the year, and be reminded to reflect on how God was present to us through that word.

The word I received was "awareness." I placed the card on my front door so every time I left my home, I would be reminded to be aware of God in my daily life. Through the year, when I found myself in situations that felt difficult, confusing, or overwhelming, I would try to remind myself to be aware of God's presence in that moment.

This is a challenging spiritual discipline, because I, like most of us, feel I have a lot of control over my life. So, when things seem to get in the way of my expectations, my first reaction is to get frustrated. When I am in a hurry to get a lot of errands done, I get aggravated by the slow driver in front of me, or the long line at the checkout lane. This is when I need to stop, take a breath and say, "Where is God in this situation?" instead of my first reaction, which is usually something like, "Why is everything working against me and getting in my way today?"

Trying to stop and be aware of God's presence through the year reminded me of an email that made the rounds years ago. It described a person talking to God at the end of a frustrating day saying, "God, why did you let all this bad stuff happen to me today? I woke up late. My

car wouldn't start. At lunch they made my sandwich wrong, so I was late getting back to the office. On the way home, my phone went dead just as a call was coming in. And to top it off, when I got home, I just wanted to relax, but my foot massager wouldn't work. Nothing went right today! Why did you let all that stuff happen?" And God replied, "Well, the death angel was at your bedside this morning and I had to send another angel to battle for your life. I let you sleep through that. I didn't let your car start because there was a drunk driver on your route that would have hit you if you had been on the road just then. At lunch the first person who made your sandwich was sick, and I didn't want you to catch what they have, because I knew you couldn't afford to miss work. Your phone went dead because the person calling was going to scam you which would have been a big mess to clean up, so I thought it was better to avoid that. And that foot massager has a short that would have knocked out the power in your house tonight, and I didn't think you wanted to be in the dark."

That anecdote has stayed with me through the years because it reminds me to trust that God is at work, even when things are not going as I thought they would. My impatience or frustration is a reminder to stop and trust that God is at work in a larger way than my daily to-do list.

I think I will move my star word to a new place this year, to keep being reminded to be aware of God's presence in every day. Happy 2024, everyone!  
+Holly

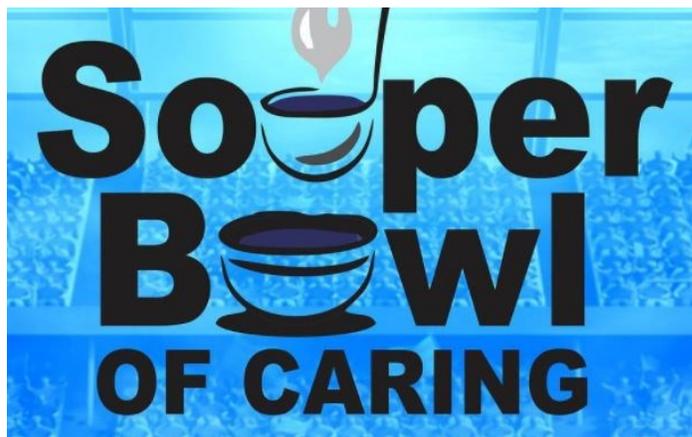


**Happy New Year!**





*Our January Mission is . . .*



*For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.*

Romans 12:4-5

**W**e are pleased to welcome four new members to our church family:

- ◆ Diana Bremm
- ◆ Chris Kirk
- ◆ Kristen Miller
- ◆ Rebecca Terhune

Thank you for joining our congregation!

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

**T**he Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held Sunday, January 28, immediately following the worship service. At this meeting, we review the Annual Report for 2023, elect new officers, and approve the pastor's terms of call. We will also do a first reading of the church bylaws, with a suggested change to reduce the size of the Session from nine elders to six elders. Copies of the proposed changes are available to review. Additionally, we will review a proposal from Archtop Fiber to sell some of our property to them; the drawings and terms of sale are available to review. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

**Y**our impact changes lives when you huddle up with our congregation to participate in this year's Souper Bowl of Caring and lead them to victory. Now, more than ever, our community needs your help. The number of families struggling to put good food on their tables continues to grow.

All the monies we collect for the Souper Bowl will stay in our community and will be given to the New Scotland Food Pantry.

The Souper Bowl Offering was started in 1990 by the youth of Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC. They were inspired by the prayer of a seminary intern: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us to be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat."

Souper Bowl of Caring is transforming the Big Game into a nation-wide movement inspiring people to give locally and make a collective impact on hunger. Over the last three years alone, thousands of groups collected more than \$25 million in dollars and food donations for hunger-relief agencies across the country.

## **WINTER WEATHER**

**T**hroughout the winter (and come what may!), we plan to have worship service as long as the roads and our parking lot are clear. If things turn to ice, or if there are other obstructions and we need to cancel church, we will send out an email, post it on our website, and put a message on the church office phone, 518-439-6454.

If you feel unsafe with whatever the weather conditions are, please stay home and stay safe and we'll see you again soon!



## THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS *by Larry Deyss, Pastor in the Pew*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life and the life was the light of all people.*

*The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:1-5*

These words from the opening of the Gospel of John are not just for the season of Christmas, nor the following season of Epiphany with the visitation of the Magi. These are words for all times. They are words for us today when there is war and destruction in Ukraine, Israel and Gaza, and in other places in the world where there is pain, suffering and death. These are words also for us in our country as we are increasingly polarized in so many areas that we find ourselves moving into the future with bated breath.

The text says, *"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."* We might find ourselves asking, "Where do we see this light in the world?" We see it in many actions of caring offered by people in a variety of places and settings in life. Seeing these things gives us hope.

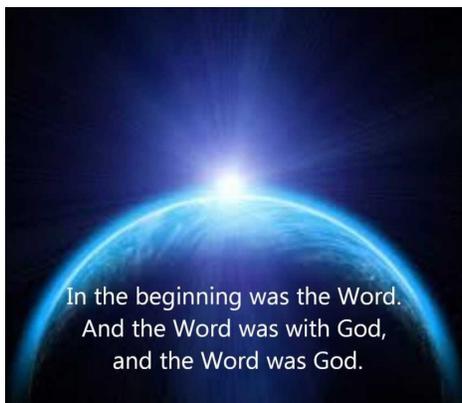
Another place where we find hope is in our trust in God who makes life possible now and into the future. We are nourished when we focus on God's Word and when we allow it to take up residence within us. This happens quietly when we read the Word, and let it sink down into our hearts, mind and souls. This is a

work that is done through a "Contemplative Reading" of the scriptures.

In our society we are not much given to Contemplation. We are more given to action and endless driving of ourselves without the comfort and benefit of the Spirit, which comes to us through worship and through a contemplative reading of the Word. However, when we do engage in contemplative reading of the Word, it will seep into our being and we will be shaped by it. Like a pot on the potter's wheel, we are steadied with one hand on the outside while

the hand inside the shapes the pot. We are shaped inwardly so that we will be able to contain and live out the Word in our daily lives. Jesus said, "So let your light shine before others, to that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

While we are not all powerful, neither are we powerless in the face of the world. That is true for as individuals and true for us as the Church. There is something else that is at work alongside of us and sometimes even in spite of us. It is the reality that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.



*On behalf of the staff at New Scotland Presbyterian Church, we thank you for making our holidays even more special with your generous gifting! Wishing you all a Happy New Year!*

*Holly, Ryan, Lisa, Carolyn and Adam*



## 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, [CliftonRun@gmail.com](mailto:CliftonRun@gmail.com).*

- Tim & Susan Albright ..... (friends of our church)
- Sherry Back ..... (Pat Hammond’s sister-in-law)
- Marie Bailey ..... (Tamara Shaw’s mom)
- Laurel and Mark Beavers
- Dana Burden ..... (Don Wagner’s family member)
- 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)
- Phil Darcy ..... (John Relyea’s friend)
- Gina Domermuth ..... (Lexi Donovan’s friend)
- Mark Elmendorf ..... (Tom Elmendorf’s brother)
- Evelyn Fuglein
- Jimmy Kelly ..... (Bill Kerr’s nephew)
- David Kinerson ..... (Larry Deyss’ brother-in-law)
- Steven Lampone ..... (Brian Nopper’s nephew)
- Aidan Lawson ..... (Robin Shufelt’s friend)
- Stephanie Markus ..... (Robin Shufelt’s friend)
- Martha Oden
- Debbie O’Shea ..... (Bonnie & Brendan O’Shea’s sister-in-law)
- Vickie Richeson ..... (Mary-Jean Riley & Gene Urgento’s sister)
- Manny Sanchez ..... (Sandy Warner’s brother-in-law)
- Brad Simon ..... (Tim & Christine Gordon’s family member)
- Gene Urgento
- Richard Winne ..... (Wayne Winne’s brother)



Please also extend your prayers for:

- the people of Lewiston, Maine
- the people of Israel, Gaza, & the Middle East
- the people of Ukraine
- our military personnel and their families.



## HISTORY CABINET

The history cabinet featured angels during the Christmas season. Sandy Warner has a wonderful and varied collection and graciously allowed me to select several for display. It was a joy to see ALL her angels, and a privilege to have “free rein” to choose some for the cabinet! Thank you, Sandy!



A great big “thank you” goes out to Scott Wright, who recently gave the church three silver trays that belonged to his dear wife, Shirley. This prompted the idea to display some of the church’s silver in the history cabinet. The Wright pieces are the large trays on the bottom shelf, while the other pieces displayed have belonged to our church for many, many years.

Anyone with a collection to share is welcome to display in the history cabinet. Displays are changed 4 times a year. ~Brenda Dwyer



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Carol Wickham .....	1-5
Robert Fuglein .....	1-6
Carter Fuglein .....	1-7
Gale Kohler .....	1-8
Tom DellaPenta.....	1-9
Dorothy Kohler .....	1-11
Stella Russell .....	1-12
Dan Coons .....	1-15
Athena Donovan .....	1-16
Pam Thornton .....	1-17
Dawn Loux .....	1-19
Stephanie Scaccia Haines ...	1-20
Mitchell Joyce.....	1-20
Judee Miller.....	1-21
Denise Throop Riedy.....	1-22
Homer Warner.....	1-27
Bill Crawford .....	1-28
Diane Bode .....	1-29
Rebecca Terhune.....	1-29
Bill Kerr .....	1-31

## JANUARY ANNIVERSARY

Meredith & Dan Coons 1-19-2019



## NATIVI-TEA *(hosted by Brenda Dwyer)*

The Deacons hosted an afternoon Christmas tea on December 14 in the church dining room.

Nativity collections were displayed in the window bays and several tables. It was delightful to see the Holy family, shepherds and wise men created from many materials: clay, recycled paper, stone, resin, felt, wood, glass, tin and more!

Pastor Holly shared an extensive collection from all parts of the world: Viet Nam, Africa, Peru, and Mexico to name just a few countries. The Gordon family brought a folk art Caribbean set, as well as a stained glass nativity crafted



by Bill Kerr. Mardell Steinkamp shared two German spinning Nativity carousels topped with small paddle fans that spin from the heat of the candles below. Peggy Throop brought the oldest set, 80+ years old, that had belonged to her mother. The variety of forms, color and textures were a visual treat for the 20+ guests.

Real China cups and plates were used for the tea, coffee, Christmas punch and a variety of tea sandwiches, Christmas cookies and other sweets. Everything was beautifully presented.

Thank you to all who set up, cleaned up, shared nativities and prepared the goodies. It was a lovely afternoon.



*From left front to rear: Peggy Throop Corinne Weeks, Ann Putnam, Kevin Dwyer, Mardell Steinkamp and Dorothy Kohler.*

*From right, front to rear: Wally Throop, Robin Shufelt, Sandy Warner, Homer Warner and Bill Kerr.*

*But with you it may be that I will stay, or even winter,  
that you may send me on my journey wherever I go.  
First Corinthians 16:6*



## SESSION NOTES

Session held their regularly scheduled meeting on January 11, 2024. The following items were discussed:

- Albany Presbytery is hosting a webinar on January 17, 2024 at 7pm. The webinar is titled "Albany Quick Leap Grow Your Church in 10 Days." Dorothy Kohler plans to attend as a representative from our church.
- The next Presbytery meeting will be on January 25, 2024. This meeting is completely virtual and Dorothy Kohler plans to attend as our church's representative.
- The Session had a second reading of the church's 2024 Budget. An updated format for balance sheet and profit-and-loss statements will be included with the Annual Report for the congregation's review later this month. A notable item discussed at the meeting is the approximate \$47,000 operating budget deficit in the coming year. Session plans to discuss possible fiscal strategies to address the shortfall. The budget was approved.
- The Steeple project was discussed. A summary was given of the current financial aspect of the project; Sacred Sites estimated the cost at \$60,000 offered to fund one-half (\$30,000) of the project and has already paid for the architect. The Presbytery has given our church a grant for \$15,000. Private donations have been given in the amount of \$1,600. The architect sent drawings for the project in the last few weeks, and their next step is to engage a contractor. Once a contractor is hired, we will know the final cost of the project, and the amount our church needs to raise.
- An update was given on the Archtop Fiber proposal. Archtop has stated that they will not lease the needed space from the church. The mechanism to secure the needed space is to utilize an easement. We received drawings of their proposal this week. Pastor Holly and Mardell Steinkamp spoke with the lawyer, Carolyn Lemmon, who has been retained by our church. The discussion centered around questions on behalf of our church and next possible steps. Session would like the

*(Continued on Page 8)*



**SESSION NOTES** (continued from page 7)

Archtop proposal to be shared with the congregation at the Congregational meeting scheduled on January 28, 2024. This is an opportunity for the congregation to ask questions and provide feedback. Archtop's written proposal and drawings will be available for people to review ahead of time.

- Also at the Congregational meeting, the first reading of the updated bylaws will occur. The Session would like to update the bylaws to amend the number of Elders required for an annual class from three members to two. This would make the size of Session six elders as opposed to nine, which is a size more in keeping with the size of our congregation.
- Pastors Holly and Quincie are in the planning stages for joint Lenten Services with Voorheesville Methodist church. The theme this year will be on how the disciple Peter is a model for figuring out our faith. All services will be at the Methodist church as they have the ability to live-stream the service. Plans are being made for the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday. More information will follow.

The next regular Session meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2024 at 5:30 pm via Zoom.



Can you . . .

*Guess who!*



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*"Original Landlord Still Offering Sanctuary"*

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 Newsletter Managing Editor .....Dorothy Kohler



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**CHURCH OFFICE  
WILL BE CLOSED**

**Our office will be closed  
 on Monday and Tuesday,  
 January 15-16, in  
 observance of the Martin  
 Luther King, Jr. holiday.  
 We will resume our normal  
 office hours, Tuesday thru  
 Friday, 9 to noon, on  
 Wednesday,  
 January 17.**