

The Bell Ringer

Of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

A Friendly Church; So When You Come — Bring a Friend

DECEMBER 2018



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Pastoral Column

by Pastor Meg Flannagan

Sweet Hollow was blessed with a flurry of visitors through the fall. Travelers passed through for work. Old friends sat in favorite pews. New neighbors came down the hill to worship, and several families trusted us with their children's care. Amongst these new faces, Carol Joseph joined our membership on November 18 by letter of transfer. Several other visitors hope to officially join us soon. Thanks be to God for this abundant blessing! As Hannah prayed (1 Samuel 1:27), "for these people we have prayed." Our Wednesday morning Prayer Group specifically prays for members, visitors, and church officers each week. We ask that God might bring us together, then show us how to care for one another. Please join us in thanking God for these new faces. Introduce yourself and welcome them into our Sweet Hollow family.

Two of the privileges of membership in a Presbyterian Church are voice and vote in congregational meetings. Every member – regardless of age, gender, or length of tenure – has a right to participate in the church's decision making. This is practiced at annual congregational meetings (next scheduled for January 27, 2019), as well as in committee process. One important annual business item is the election of church officers. Our bylaws stipulate a bicameral form of government between the Session (seven Elders) and Diaconate (eight Deacons). Candidates for church officer come from the larger church membership; the larger church membership then votes to confirm (or deny) each nomination. Once elected, officers serve three-year terms. They are on the front lines of information and decision making (small and large – from rental contracts to the method and frequency of Communion in worship).

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Memory Verse

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Pastoral Column -- *Continued from page 1*

As active membership and volunteerism has declined over the last decade, we have struggled to nominate the necessary number of officer candidates. After repeated conversations and consultation with the congregation at a forum on November 11, the current Session voted to seek a one-year exemption from the bylaws in 2019, reducing our Session to 5 people (electing 3 Elders: 2 serving 3-year terms and 1 person completing a resigned officer's final year). The Congregational Nominating Committee is now seeking these candidates. Please speak to a current church officer or Pastor Meg if you have any questions about the process. We covet your prayers, and look forward to bringing a slate of faithful servants to our January meeting.

See you in church!

Prayer Corner

by Carol Keil

As we prepare our hearts to celebrate this Advent season, let us give thanks for the many blessings of this past year:

We give thanks for the presence of new member Carol Joseph and for the families joining us with children participating in Sunday School.

We give thanks for all who have pledged their ongoing financial support of Sweet Hollow in 2019.

We give thanks for the church officers completing 3 years of service: Elder and Clerk of Session Lynn Burke, Elders Brian Schiffmacher and Jim Sommermeyer and Deacons Jean Cavanagh and Bill Chamberlain.

We give thanks for the presence of St. Francis American Old Catholic Church and *Centro Misionero* who share our worship space and have generously joined us both in work and in worship.

We give thanks for the leadership and encouragement of Pastor Meg Flanagan and for the dedicated service of faithful volunteers who planned and served at our Pumpkin Patch and Open Mic Night fundraisers.

So much has been accomplished by willing hearts!

Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

Rev. Mary Margaret Flannagan, Pastor

Rachel Fogel, Choir Director

Barbara Zimmerman, Secretary

Elders:

Lynn Burke

Ed Conroy

Tim Mason

Brian Schiffmacher

Jim Sommermeyer

Emily Wagner

Youth Elder:

Rebecca VanHouten

Deacons:

Jean Cavanaugh

Bill Chamberlain

Barbara Martin

Frank Sansone

Dan Schiffmacher

Jason Wagner

Marc Young

Other Groups & Activities:

Book Discussion

Christian Education

Church Brunch

Fellowship & Outreach
& Mission

House & Property

Nominating Committee

Personnel

Prayer Circle

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Stewardship

Women For Women

Worship

Youth Group

Church Historian

Bell Ringer Editor

Sukey Walter

Lynn Burke

Bill Walter

Barbara Martin &

Maureen Sansone

Bill Von Brook

Jim Sommermeyer

Frank Sansone

Carol Keil

Sukey Walter

Jim Sommermeyer

Maureen Sansone &

Sukey Walter

Marc Young

Pastor Meg Flannagan

Bill Walter

Bill Chamberlain



New member Carol Joseph, welcomed to the congregation.

Notes From Session

by Lynn Burke

The Session met on November 18 and decided to ask the Congregational Nominating Committee to look for nominations for three Elders and four Deacons. This would reduce the number of Elders to a total of five for the coming year. This change is for one year only as we navigate our way through the coming year. The Session will revisit this next year. A vote will be held at the Congregational Meeting in January to approve this one time exception.

The Session welcomed a new member to Sweet Hollow, Carol Joseph, who has been attending worship with us for the past year. They also approved four contracts for building usage over the coming months and discussed property repairs, especially the parking lot. More information still to come in that regard.

Stewardship - Budget News

by Jim Sommermeyer

The end of the year approaches but we focus only on the joy of celebrating the birth of Jesus. In doing so we are reminded of God's great love for us. We give thanks for the many blessings in our lives and the opportunity to practice stewardship of the world around us. What can bring us more sustained joy than to care for the people, animals, plants and places in our lives? Much of the world depends on us to care for it — are we up to the task? Can we give more of ourselves by doing more, being more, caring more? Have our limits been defined or are they infinite?

There are signs that we members of Sweet Hollow are beginning to live up to our potential. Fundraising efforts have found a new gear: The Pumpkin Patch was the most successful ever and the Open Mic night was a joyous success. Volunteer Mission efforts are getting solid support and leading us to new opportunities for mission. Property usage continues to increase. Membership is increasing. Participation in worship service has increased recently. Members and visitors alike love this special place for which we are entrusted to care.

Our committee continues to work on obtaining estimates for a potential grant application. Please keep your eyes open for the next meeting of the team. All are welcome to join the meeting.

It's early in our Stewardship season, however I am very encouraged by the pledges returned so far. We've received 21 pledges. If you haven't yet had the chance to return your 2019 pledge, please return it as soon as possible as we seek to create a realistic budget in January.

Thanks to God for the abundance he has given us. Joyful things are happening at Sweet Hollow! We have much to do and I know we can do it together if we trust in our faith and pray to God to show us the way.

Women For Women Events

by Maureen Sansone

Women For Women (W4W) provides an opportunity to gather in fun, meaningful Christian fellowship. Events are held primarily on the first Monday of each month from October through June, and Women For Women (W4W) is open to all women. Here's a sampling of our most recent events and what's planned in the near future:

Clay Nation Event-On November 4, we enjoyed an afternoon of creativity, fun and fellowship at Clay Nation Pottery Studio in Glen Cove. Finished projects included Christmas ornaments, a Christmas candle holder, a sunflower coffee mug and dipping bowls.

Decking The Halls-On November 26, we gathered together to beautify our facility with wreaths, Christmas trees, paper garland chains, etc., while enjoying delicious Yuletide goodies and listening to Christmas music.

Women For Women (W4W) Remaining Events for 2018-2019

Wednesday, December 5 — Old First Presbyterian Church Women's Christmas Luncheon

Monday, February 5 — Dinner/Possible Movie

Monday, March 5 — Game Night

Monday, April 1 — Scavenger Hunt

Friday, May 3 through Sunday, May 5 — Smithtown Retreat — Holmes Camp

Monday, June 3 — Ladies High Tea

Please note: Planned activities are subject to cancellation/rescheduling due to inclement weather, etc.

Looking forward to seeing you at one, a few, or all of our events!

Seeking Leaders of the Church

The Congregational Nominating Committee is seeking suggestions for members to serve as Elder and Deacon. Descriptions of the positions are included below. We welcome nominations of those you see as particularly gifted for serving as officers of the church. We are especially glad to hear if God has called YOU for service at Sweet Hollow! This year we will nominate three Elders and three Deacons for service from February 2019 – January 2022. Please contact Pastor Meg or Barbara Martin for more information.

The Duties of Elders

The Book of Order, G-2.0301, states: "Congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they 'lord it over' the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session."

The Duties of Deacons

The Book of Order, G-2.0201, states: "The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry."

Mission Team News

by Maureen Sansone and Sukey Walter

Many thanks to all who donated to our clothing drive to benefit the United Veterans Beacon House. We received an abundance of clothing, shoes, accessories and linens, and were blessed to pass it all on to military families in need.

Adopt A Family: This year, Madonna Heights is expanding their outreach. We will be adopting 13 children, ranging in age from 2 months to 4 years. A tag for each child is on the small tree on the table at the back of the Sanctuary. **If you take a tag, you MUST sign your name next to the child's name on the Sign-Up List next to the tree** (so we can be sure each child is accounted for and matched with a church member). Please spend \$25 to \$35 on each child, or donate a gift card or money to contribute to our children's gifts. We're requesting that gifts be returned, wrapped and marked with the child's name by ***no later than Sunday, December 16***. If you have any questions, please contact Sukey at sukey1@me.com.

Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Eat) is assisting HiHi (Huntington Interfaith Homeless Initiative) with supplies for the men whom they attend to during the cold weather months by donating five Storm Supply Boxes. Sweet Hollow will be donating one box. Thank you to all who have volunteered to bring in the necessary items. There is a HiHi Storm Supply Box receptacle in the church office. You may drop the items off during the week or on Sundays. You may also contact Maureen Sansone at msansone@optonline.net or 631-385-1855. **All donations are needed by no later than December 10.**

Family Service League: Sunday School is making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the Family Service League the second Sunday of each month. We'll prepare 40 lunches on ***Sunday, December 9*** with sandwiches, bottled water, fruit and a salty snack. If you'd like to make a monetary donation so that supplies may be purchased for this worthy mission, please see Frank Sansone or Lynn Burke.

Food Pantry Basket: Please continue to consider donating items for the **Food Pantry Basket** in the breezeway. This time of year, cereals, peanut butter, jelly, snacks, soups, coffee, tea, crackers, baby products and health and beauty aids are needed, and as always, very much appreciated.

Announcement

If you or a loved one are struggling with suicidal thoughts, please reach out to someone.

You are loved! Your presence makes a difference in the world. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255.

Pastor Meg is also glad to listen and pray with anyone. Please call the church office to speak with her or set up an appointment.



Open Mic Concert Fundraiser Was A Rousing Success!!

by Maureen Sansone

Our Open Mic Concert Fundraiser, held on November 10 was a great success!

Attendees enjoyed a wide array of musical styles, from folk music to the blues, as well as original compositions, all enthusiastically presented by many talented, wonderful performers.

The fun-filled evening **raised a total of \$2,200 for our beloved church**, and featured Gift Basket Raffles, a 50/50 Raffle, and refreshments, including brownies, assorted home-baked cookies, cakes, chocolate covered pretzel rods, fruit bowls, and packaged chips, pretzels, etc., as well as bottled water, juice and assorted sodas.

Special thanks to Lynn and Rich Burke, who spearheaded this event, to the Fundraising Committee — chaired by Mickey Rogers — to all the performers, and to our church members who graciously volunteered their time and talents, by assisting with setup, decorating, making and bringing in baked goods, staffing the admissions and food tables, ordering and selling 50/50 raffle tickets and gift basket tickets, donating gift baskets, cleaning up, etc. This fundraiser would not have been possible without your efforts, which are so very appreciated.

December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
2 10 am Worship	3 Jutta Christen's Birthday	4 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	5 10 am Prayer Circle	6 Monica & Paul van Houten's Anniversary	7 Rebecca van Houten's Birthday	8
9 10 am Worship	10 Fred & Janet Chacalos' Anniversary	11 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	12 10 am Prayer Circle	13	14	15
16 10 am Worship 11:15 am Church Officers' Meeting	17 Brian Schiffmacher's Birthday	18 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	19 10 am Prayer Circle	20 Nicole Schiffmacher's Birthday	21	22 Brianna Conroy's Birthday
23 10 am Worship 11:15 am Birthday Party for Jesus	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 5 pm Family Service 9 pm Candlelight Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY Church Office Closed	26 Laura Fallon's & Barbara Martin's Birthdays	27	28 Bill Walter's Birthday	29
30 10 am Worship	31					

**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF SWEET HOLLOW**

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We're on the Web!

www.sweethollowpresby.org

**BELL RINGER DEADLINE
for December Issue
December 20**

Church Officers' Meeting

The next church officers' meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 16, at 11:30 am. All church members are welcome to attend and observe business.

Christmas Services

Sunday, December 23: A family-friendly and interactive service. Both the St. Francis American Old Catholic and Centro Misionero congregations will join us for worship.

Christmas Eve, December 24: 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm services.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Would you like your Bellringer to go in color electronically thus saving us time and postage? Please contact the church office.