

The Bell Ringer

Of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

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

JANUARY 2019



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Pastoral Column

by Pastor Meg Flannagan

Our Advent devotional called us to draw near the manger scene, and draw near the Triune God. Each week we watched and waited for Christ's return. On Christmas we welcomed his birth. Now, in the season of Epiphany, we join the Wise Men and others who follow the star. Where is God leading our church? Where will we find Christ in the world?

Last fall brought a steady stream of gifts and blessings. After years of praying for a renewed Sunday School, God answered our prayers with regular attendance and new friends. Carol Keil taught 4-8 children Sunday School almost every week between Homecoming (September) and Christmas. Worship attendance increased overall, necessitating the printing of additional bulletins. Volunteers answered the call for old and new activities and fundraisers. Additional mission donations allowed us to regularly invest in our community. We are grateful for God's faithfulness in all these gifts and more.

If we could plant these gifts in our church garden, we would find ourselves tending a tray of seedlings. Small, fragile gifts of life that still need protecting and tending. Now is not the time to say "thank you" and walk away. This is time to intentionally nurture, water, and fertilize our new growth. We need your help! Please take one or more of the following tasks in 2019:

- 1) Introduce yourself to one of our new visitors or members. Connect during coffee hour. Call or email during the week. Invite them into the deeper friendships of Sweet Hollow.
- 2) Continue to attend worship every week. Come and share your praise and lament with our faith community. Pray for us as we pray for you.

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CALL OF CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow, located at 95 Old Country Road, Melville, New York 11747, will be held in the Sanctuary on Sunday, January 27, 2019, immediately following the 10:00 am worship service.

By order of the Session, Lynn Burke, Clerk

Pastoral Column — *Continued from page 1*

- 3) Join a committee. Help with specific programs and activities at least once a month. Rake the yard, tidy a closet, deliver food donations, usher, or teach Sunday School. Our small congregation relies on everyone to share the work.
- 4) Make (and fulfill) a financial pledge for 2019. We need approximately \$3800 income each week to pay our expected expenses.

The coming year will be a defining one for Sweet Hollow. Church officers will continue to consider the issues before us and the best management of our resources. They cannot be or do church on their own. Join us in giving thanks to God for our many blessings, nurturing these tender gifts, and investing in our future. See you in church!

Lighting the Advent Candles



Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

Rev. Mary Margaret Flannagan, Pastor
 Rachel Fogel, Choir Director
 Barbara Zimmerman, Secretary
 Tracy Dein, Treasurer

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

Prayer Corner

by Carol Keil

We lift up healing prayers:

For Malachy O'Connor recovering from injuries sustained in a hang glider accident.

For Bill Walter recovering from hip replacement surgery.

We lift up prayers of thanksgiving:

For the children attending Sunday School each week.

For visitors and hopes for new members in 2019.

For those nominated to positions as church officers.

For the opportunity to vote at the congregational meeting this month.

For the volunteers teaching in Sunday School and tending the Nursery each week.

For the opportunity to serve the homeless in our community with the gift of lunches packed each month by our Sunday School children and leaders.

For the opportunities to hold joint worship services with members of Centro Misionero and St. Francis congregations.

May God continue to bless and guide our endeavors this New Year 2019!

Stewardship - Budget News

by Jim Sommermeyer

As I write this, it appears that Sweet Hollow has survived another year. We've had a lot of intense discussions about the future of our church and Christian churches in general in the United States. Some of that talk has finally turned into action and we need everyone to help. I am hoping that we have turned a corner and that the good momentum we have had recently is sustainable.

Let's give thanks for the many blessings in our lives and the opportunity to practice Stewardship of the world around us. Let's give thanks for another year of opportunity for Sweet Hollow to be an oasis of peace in the midst of our busy lives.

Midway through our Stewardship season, I continue to be very encouraged by the pledges returned so far. We've received 35 pledges, slightly more than the number we received last year. If you haven't yet had the chance to return a 2019 pledge, please do so as soon as possible as we seek to create a realistic budget in January. 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 in January. All are welcome to join the meeting.

Fundraising efforts are up year over year. Property usage continues to increase. Participation in worship service has increased with a lot of new faces, especially children. It's clear that members and visitors alike love this special place that we are entrusted to care for.

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.

Christian Education

by Lynn Burke

Sunday School will be held during the month of January. Our lessons will cover the Epiphany and Young Jesus.

As always, the Nursery is open with Sukey Walter as our Supervisor. During January, Mike Engel will be standing in for Sukey. The small room in the back of the Sanctuary is also available with projects and crafts.

If anyone can volunteer as a teacher or room shepherd, please talk to Carol Keil or Lynn Burke. It will be much appreciated.

We look forward to seeing you and your children each month!

Christmas Pageant

The Christmas Pageant was held during the 10:00 am service on December 23. The Centro Misionero and St. Francis congregations joined us. This was followed by a birthday party for Jesus.



Notes from Session

by Lynn Burke

At the recommendation of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, and after consultation with the congregation, the church officers put the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) work on hold in September. We have been considering a number of big issues related to our church membership, finances, and staffing. Repeated meetings with Sweet Hollow's officers and congregants, as well as with neighboring Presbyterians and Presbytery members, found common experiences and concerns about our future and diminishing resources. There are no quick or easy answers in this process. Ongoing initiatives may redirect our paths; thus, the church officers recommend dissolving our PNC. This will allow our energies to further explore our own gifts, resources, and limitations, as well as continue the conversation about shared ministries with neighboring Presbyterian congregations. Dissolving the PNC will also allow those particular committee members to reinvest in other areas at Sweet Hollow. Because the PNC is a congregational committee (elected in January 2018), the vote to dissolve the group will come to our annual congregational meeting on January 27, 2019.

The church officers removed 29 names from our active roll. Some of these people are adult children of current members, while other people have moved away or did not respond to repeated church contacts. This roll removal dramatically affects our membership numbers. It gives us a realistic picture of who we are. This helps us with program, financial and volunteer planning. It will also save us approximately \$1600 in per capita dues. Each person to be removed will be sent a letter stating that unless they contact the church, they will be removed from our active roll. Should anyone decide to reactivate their membership, they are welcome to rejoin us in the life of the church!

Women for Women (W4W)

by Maureen Sansone

Women For Women (W4W), which is open to all women at Sweet Hollow, 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.

On November 26, we gathered together to beautify our space with wreaths, Christmas trees, paper garland chains, etc., while enjoying delicious yuletide goodies and listening to Christmas music.

Please note: W4W will not be meeting in January, due to the weather.

Here are our upcoming planned activities:

Monday, Feb. 4 - Dinner/Possible Movie

Monday, March 4 - Games Night

Monday, April 1 - Scavenger Hunt

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

Monday, June 3 - Ladies High Tea

All planned activities are subject to cancellation/rescheduling due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances, etc.

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

Mission Team News

by Maureen Sansone

A blessed, joyful New Year to all! As we reflect on how bountiful the gifts in our lives have been this past year, let us look ahead to 2019, as the Holy Spirit moves through us while we continue our mission to reach out to those in need.

Adopt A Family

Many thanks to all who graciously participated in our annual Madonna Heights **Adopt A Family**. For these children who typically wouldn't receive gifts for Christmas, you have all surely brightened their yuletide with your generosity.

Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Eat) and HiHi (Huntington Interfaith Homeless Initiative)

Many thanks to all who generously donated items for the **HiHi Storm Supply Box**, which provides vital supplies for the men whom HiHi attend to during the cold weather months. Through **Project H.O.P.E.**, Sweet Hollow was blessed to be a part of this ministry. When the Storm Supply Box items were dropped off at St. Hugh of Lincoln Church, through which Project H.O.P.E. is run, the coordinator, Denise, was truly moved by the overwhelming kindness of our church members. We look forward to assisting with this ministry again in the future.

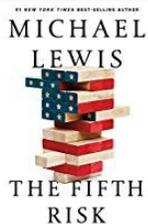
Family Service League

Sunday School will be making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the Family Service League the second Sunday of each month. On **Sunday, January 13**, we'll prepare 40 lunches, 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.

Book Discussion

by Sukey Walter



We have picked our book: *The Fifth Risk* by Michael Lewis. We will meet on Thursday, January 17, in the parlor at 1:30 pm.

“What are the consequences if the people given control over our government have no idea how it works?” Join us for some lively discussion and find out.

Santa Stops By For Coffee & Cookies

His reindeer and sleigh was a Melville Fire Dept. truck.



January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Church Office Closed	2 10 am Prayer Circle Jonathan Mandel's Birthday	3 Rachel Fogel's Birthday	4	5
6 10 am Worship Annual Reports Due	7	8 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal Bill Von Brook's Birthday	9 10 am Prayer Circle	10	11	12
13 10 am Worship	14 Church Office Closed 7:30 pm Church Officers' Meeting	15 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	16 10 am Prayer Circle	17 1:30 pm Book Discussion Timothy Schiffmacher's Birthday	18	19
20 10 am Worship 11:30 am Cong. Forum	21	22 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	23 10 am Prayer Circle Wyatt Wagner's Birthday	24	25	26 9 am Presbytery Meeting at Valley Stream
27 10 am Worship 11 am Congregational Meeting	28	29 11:00 am Presbytery Luncheon 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	30 10 am Prayer Circle	31 Bill Chamberlain's Birthday		

**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF SWEET HOLLOW**

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Melville, NY 11747*

Phone: 631-367-9249



We're on the Web!

www.sweethollowpresby.org

BELL RINGER DEADLINE

For February Issue

January 24

Epiphany Sunday, January 6

The Wise Men brought the baby Jesus gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh. Because Christians celebrate their arrival on Epiphany, it is the traditional day for gift giving. In that spirit, all families in worship on Epiphany (January 6) will receive a special gift.

Church Officers' Meeting

The next church officers' meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 14, at 7:30 pm. All church members are welcome to attend and observe business.

Project Regeneration — Change of Date

The Presbytery is hosting lunch at Sweet Hollow on Tuesday, January 29. Small and diminishing congregations are invited to participate in a four-lunch series (over 6 to 9 months) called "Project Regeneration." This is a forum for us to meet, learn from one another, and identify and model "best practice" approaches to the ministry of their churches. Each church is asked to send two to three people as representatives. Sweet Hollow is hosting this program because we are actively looking for tools and solutions to guide us into the future. Please let Pastor Meg know if you would like to attend.

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