

The Bell Ringer



Of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

No matter who you are or where you are on your life journey, you are welcome here.

December 2024



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From the Pastor's Nook:

Advent: A Season of Expectation and Growth

Dear Church Family,

Advent is upon us—a sacred season of anticipation, reflection, and hope. As we light the candles of the Advent wreath each week, we're reminded of the ever-brightening promise of Christ's presence in our lives and the world. This year, Advent feels especially meaningful as we celebrate the growth and vibrancy of our church community.

Like the shepherds keeping watch under a starry sky, we're looking forward with wonder and expectation. Our church is growing—not just in numbers but in spirit, mission, and love. New faces are joining us, new ministries are forming and reforming, and our vision for the future is expanding. These are signs of God's work among us, a reminder that we are part of a living, unfolding story.

Advent invites us to prepare our hearts and our community for what's to come. It's a time to pause amidst the busyness, to reflect on what truly matters, and to consider how we can be part of bringing hope, peace, joy, and love to the world.

As we move through this season, we encourage you to:

- **Engage in Worship:** Join us each Sunday for Advent services as we reflect on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love.
- **Serve Together:** Consider participating in one of our ministry opportunities to share the light of Christ through worship and service.

Invite Others: Advent is a perfect time to invite friends or family to experience the warmth of our growing community.

Let us journey together with open hearts and joyful anticipation, trusting that God is guiding us toward a future filled with promise and possibility.

With hope and gratitude,

PW

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS HELP TO BUILDS GOD'S LOVING KINGDOM

Every Sunday, we have the incredible opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ by extending a warm welcome to those who walk through our doors. Whether it's a visitor seeking a spiritual home, a neighbor curious about our community, or someone stepping into church for the first time, our greeting can be the start of something beautiful—new relationships and a growing connection to God's loving kingdom.

When we greet someone new, we're doing more than saying hello; we're acknowledging their presence, showing that they matter, and inviting them into a space where they can experience God's love. It's a simple act with profound implications. A friendly smile, a handshake, or even remembering a name can make someone feel seen and valued.

Here are just a few reasons why greeting new faces is so important:

- **Fostering Connection:** People are longing for authentic relationships. When we greet warmly, we create an environment where connections can flourish.
- **Reflecting Christ's Love:** Jesus welcomed everyone with open arms. When we do the same, we mirror His love and compassion to others.
- **Building Community:** Each new person who joins our church brings unique gifts and perspectives that enrich our shared faith journey.

As our church grows, let's be intentional about creating a culture of welcome. Look for opportunities to introduce yourself to someone new, invite them to sit with you, or share information about upcoming events and ministries. You never know how a simple act of kindness might open the door to a deeper relationship with God and our community.

Together, we can build a place where everyone feels at home—a reflection of God's kingdom here on earth. Thank you for helping us create a church where love, connection, and belonging thrive.

FAITH FORMATION

By Carol Keil

Ring in the Season!

Bells of the renowned Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris will be ringing on Sunday, December 8, 2024, calling worshippers to the first service following 5 years of restoration brought on by the devastating fire on April 15, 2019.

Bells hold a unique place in the history of both religious and secular celebrations worldwide. The Chinese developed bell-making techniques around 2000 BCE. The earliest bells were made of clay. The development of bronze, created by combining copper with tin, allowed for the development of what we know today as bell-making or bell-founding.

We encourage you to look up bells, bell-making, and bellringing using your favorite search engine. It's great reading to learn how bells were created using the organic materials at hand and in very basic conditions to mold bronze bells still calling us to gather today!

The sound of church bells inspired poets Longfellow and Tennyson. Their words further inspired the creation of the hymns *Ring Out Wild Bells* and *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*. *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* entered the world of pop culture when Bing Crosby introduced his recording with music adapted by Johnny Marks.

Let us celebrate this Advent Season with "joyful noise"!



WORSHIP NOTES

As we look forward to the end of our calendar year, please be sure to remember some of the upcoming items in worship.

December 1st—The first Sunday of Advent which last for four Sundays leading up to Christmas Eve.

December 24th—Christmas Eve worship—There will be two Christmas Eve services. 7 PM Family Service with fun for all & 9 PM traditional Lessons & Carols with candlelight.



WORSHIP NOTES cont'd

Liturgist Schedule

We give thanks for all of those individuals who help to lead worship on any given Sunday. It is a gift to the congregation and to Pastor Wade to see the willingness of others to serve God's people.

December 1st—Niaja Mowatt

December 8th—Sheri Myers

December 15th—Sheri Myers

December 22nd—Lynn Burke

December 29th—Carol Keil

Serving as a liturgist is a gift to the church. You don't have to be a bible expert, a linguist, or have a seminary degree to serve as a liturgist. A liturgist has a heart to help and lead others. Remember that Moses was called to lead and speak in front of people despite his difficulties speaking: "How then should Pharaoh heed me—who gets tonguetied!" ([Exod. 6:12](#)). Moses has already pointed this issue out a few chapters earlier, protesting that he has "never been a man of words" and is "slow of speech and slow of tongue." Scholars believe that Moses was afflicted with the challenge of stuttering. Look how he turned out with God's help!

If you have questions about serving as liturgist, talk to Pastor Wade. It is a joy to those explore the calling to serve.

DROP IN CHOIR!!!!!! - DECEMBER 24TH

It's not too early to think about Christmas Eve!!!! On Sunday December 24th, we will be having two worship services. One occurring at our normal 7 PM worship service that will be oriented towards families and the other at 9 PM which is our Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols. At the Candlelight service, we are hoping to gather enough interested individuals to drop in for a brief choir rehearsal that will offer an anthem sung at the Candlelight Service. Let Pastor Wade or Jason know if you are interested or available!!!!



Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

(631) 367 - 9249

www.sweethollowpresby.org

Rev. Wade Pond, Pastor

Jason Black, Director of Music Ministries

Lori Kevelos, Church Administrator

Jill Conroy, Treasurer

Beatrice Reiser, Clerk of Session

Elders: Ed Conroy

Melissa D'Angelo

Niaja Mowatt

Frank Sansone

Bea Reiser

December 2024

7...Rebecca Van Houten

26... Laura Fallon, Barbara Martin

Anniversaries

6...Monica & Paul Van Houten

SESSION MEETING!

The session meets monthly, typically on the third Monday of each month at 8 PM. Most meetings occur via Zoom. In person meetings occur February/May/September/November. The next meeting is November 18th. Any member of the church is welcome to attend. Ask Pastor Wade for details.

Find our website and social media links!

www.sweethollowpresby.org

Facebook/YouTube/Instagram

<https://www.facebook.com/sweethollowpresby>

<https://youtube.com/>

[@presbyterianchurchofsweeth1401](https://www.youtube.com/@presbyterianchurchofsweeth1401)

<https://www.instagram.com/presbysweethollow>

STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF

Unique GIVING Opportunities

GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday is Tuesday, December 3rd!!!!

Giving Tuesday is a day where people are called to make donations to non-profit organizations following the busy and hectic environment of Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Small Store Saturday and Cyber Monday. It is meant to reorient us to the idea that **it is truly better to GIVE than to receive!**

A better future of God's creation is being built by all of us right now in the small actions we take each day. Acts of care, love, and understanding extend outward, like the threads of a beautiful tapestry. Whether it's offering a kind smile, a helping hand, or an hour of your time—these acts have a way of rippling out, becoming part of something much greater. That is the power of radical generosity.

On this Giving Tuesday, consider a financial gift to the church. This would be an extra gift above and beyond your normal giving practices. Last Year, Giving Tuesday resulted in raising funds to a total of \$1900 for the church. It was an amazing response! The question is....could we do better?

Please feel encouraged to share this request to other people in your orbit. Friends, family and acquaintances are looking for places where their gifts can make a difference. That place is **HERE!**

Find our webpage below to give online (or give via VENMO @PCSHsecretary95) as we continue to grow by being **"The Heart of Christ in the Heart of Long Island."**



STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF

Unique GIVING Opportunities

EMPLOYER MATCHING GIFTS

As we seek to steward our resources and strengthen our church's financial foundation, I want to share an exciting opportunity that can help your generosity go even further: **employer matching gift programs**.

Many employers offer to match charitable donations made by their employees to eligible 501(c)(3) organizations like our church. This means that your contributions can be doubled—or even tripled—at no additional cost to you. It's a simple yet powerful way to maximize your giving and support the ministries that mean so much to us all.

Here's how you can participate:

1. **Check Your Employer's Policy:** Contact your HR department or visit your company's intranet to see if they offer a matching gift program.
2. **Submit Your Donation:** Make a financial gift to the church through your preferred giving method (online, check, or cash).
3. **Request the Match:** Complete your employer's matching gift request form (often available online). You may need our church's information:
 - **Name:** PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SWEET HOLLOW
 - **Address:** 95 OLD COUNTRY ROAD, MELVILLE, NY 11747
 - **EIN/Tax ID:** [EIN Number]

If you're unsure whether your company offers a matching program, there are online tools available to help you search. You might be surprised at how many employers support this initiative!

We're so grateful for the ways you give of your time, talents, and treasures to support the work God is doing through our church. Employer matching gifts are an easy way to multiply your impact and help us continue our mission to serve, grow, and share the love of Christ.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact Pastor Wade 717-413-5837 (CELL).

Your Finance Team – Jill Conroy (Treasurer) Melissa D'Angelo, Lori Kevelos (Church Administrator) & Pastor Wade.

STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF

2 Corinthians 9:7 says: "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Greetings friends and family of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow,

It has been a pleasure serving the needs of our church members and the surrounding community. However, continuing our ongoing ministry efforts comes at a great expense to the church. As the leadership of the church has assessed its year end needs, we are projecting an annual budget deficit of approximately \$22,500. Most of this expense is due to increasing costs, especially insurance.

Without this money, the church's remaining reserves will be depleted, and some bills may go unpaid. That is why we are turning to you for support. Your extra financial gifts to the church will help us keep the spirit of service alive, as Christ has called us to do. It will also help us bridge the gap until the time when the sale of the back portion of the property is complete (expected mid-2025) and our reserves will be restored to a comfortable level.

To make a donation, visit our online portal at <https://sweethollowpresby.org> or make a check out to the church (PCSH) or give via Venmo. Any amount is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Pastor Wade, the session or Lori, our church administrator.

May God Bless You Always.

The Session of PCSH

Bea Reiser, Clerk

Frank Sansone

Ed Conroy

Niaja Mowatt

Melissa D'Angelo

Jill Conroy, Treasurer

Rev. Wade Pond, Pastor

MISSION & MORE



Mittens & More Tree

We're blessed to announce that the *Mittens & More Tree* has been placed in the front of the sanctuary, awaiting donations of children's gloves, mittens, hats and scarves to benefit the children of Tri-CYA (Tri-Community Youth Agency).

Please bring your donations in on any Sunday and place them on the *Mittens & More Tree* up through December 15th, at which time the items will be blessed and then delivered to Tri-CYA for distribution to the children whom they serve.

You may also drop off your donations to the Church Office during office hours, Monday through Friday between 8:00 AM and 12:00 PM. Please call Lori in advance at 631-367-9249.

Thank you all for bringing warmth to those in need.

MISSION & MORE

TOYS OF HOPE TOY DRIVE

****Make a Child's Holiday*

*One They'll Always Remember****

Please bring in new, unwrapped toys through Friday, December 13th, to benefit Toys of Hope, a Huntington Station based organization providing joy to children in the community through their toy ministry. Help us to give a gift to a child in need!



MISSION & MORE

We helped “Take a Bite Out of Holiday Hunger” in Generating Food Boxes



SUCCESS, SUCCESS, SUCCESS—that describes our efforts to produce not two but six boxes of Thanksgiving fixings for local families in need this season. This has been our best effort in all the years the Mission Team has earmarked this cause.

Days before Thanksgiving, our boxes and many other multiples of items were dropped off to be distributed days later. We should all be very proud of the impact our six boxes made along with the other 1,100 boxes the community came forth to create for the Helping Hand Rescue Mission.

Our boxes gave six families the opportunity to have a day of food to celebrate our annual holiday of Giving Thanks. The Mission Team thanks you once again for coming through in one of our Mission's monthly goals.

Through guidance and the grace of our Lord, we strive to make life more stable and fuller of love and support for those in need. Ahead of us now, is the December Toy, Mitten, Gloves, Hats Drive that will be shared between the CYA and the Rescue Mission. If you have any new ideas for this collection mission or comments, please contact Jane at looneychick36@yahoo.com and she will share with the committee.

THANKS Sweet Hollow



Prayer Corner

by Carol Keil

Emmanuel... GOD WITH US!

Our prayers this Advent season... in every season, are a reminder to see, hear, taste, and feel the presence of God with us in every moment of every day.

All we must do is open our hearts to God's presence.

We pray that **Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love will be more than symbolic candles on the Advent wreath. May the spirit of each word burn brightly within us.**

Our prayers of thanksgiving ascend for the time, talents, and fellowship shared in supporting the work of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow.

Amen.



Find our website and social media links!

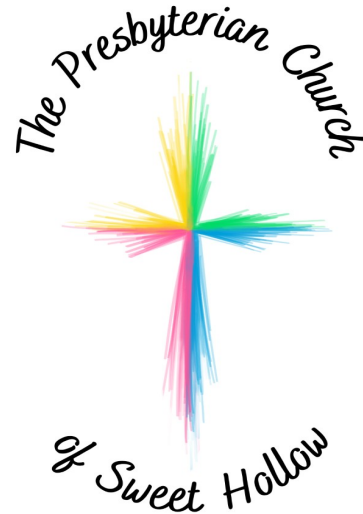
www.sweethollowpresby.org

Facebook/YouTube/Instagram

<https://www.facebook.com/sweethollowpresby>

<https://youtube.com/@presbyterianchurchofsweet1401>

<https://www.instagram.com/>



CHURCH PROPERTY SALE UPDATE

The church has received an offer for the church property consisting of land that is predominantly located behind the church. The offer is being reviewed by session in anticipation of a congregational meeting on Sunday, September 15th, following worship.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CHURCH?

These funds could serve as reserves that will allow us to continue operating for years to come. There is more work to be done in the process with the presbytery and the congregation to finalize any transactions and receive those funds. These overall processes could take 6 to 9 months.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE UPDATES

Bell Ringer Delivery: To have your copy of the Bell Ringer delivered by e-mail instead of on paper, please call the office, e-mail <pcshsecretary@hotmail.com> or Pastor Wade. You will receive your copy faster, the pictures will be in color, it will save the cost of paper and toner,