

The Bell Ringer

Of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

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

DECEMBER 2019



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Pastoral Column

by Pastor Meg Flannagan

I am delighted – truly – to be back in the office, listening to what God has done these past weeks. While it was a blessing to be home with our new baby, Finch, for three months, I am glad to return to work that I find fulfilling.

As we prepared for Finch's arrival, we unpacked boxes filled with clothes and toys and supplies that Huck used three years ago. Many of these things were lovingly given by **you**. (Thank you for the gift that keeps giving!) It was fun to remember Huck being that small. We thought about newborn Huck fitting in (now) Finch's bath seat. We compared pictures of Huck and Finch wearing the same outfit – three years apart – and laughed about the differences between them. The repetition was not exhausting; it exponentially multiplied our joy and wonder. Oh, the things we've learned! Oh, the laughter shared! Oh, the tears and poop and sleepless nights that passed!

Some people find the repetition of church seasons to be dull. The return of Advent and Christmas leave them wanting for something *new*, something else. Eyes cross and ears close as the same-old stories are told... again. The same-old decorations carefully hung year after year seem shabby compared to the sparkly and glamorous displays in store windows. Why can't the church reproduce Christmas like a great movie director reproduces an old movie, updating costumes and sets and language? Why don't we add some pizzazz to the whole affair?

The Christian church year is patterned on Jesus Christ's coming, living, and dying. For over 1500 years we have journeyed through the waiting, the teaching, and the suffering. Over 1500 times we have collectively repeated the same-old stories. Over 1500 Advent fasts delivered followers to their rightful end in 1500 Christmas celebrations. If you find yourself thinking that you've heard it all before, pause. ... Let the repetition multiply your joy and wonder. Oh, the things we (The Church) have learned! Oh, the laughter God has shared! Oh, the grief and lament and sleepless nights that have passed! Look where God has brought us!

I look forward to walking with you through the Advent wait – hearing the predictable stories, singing the same-old songs, and seeing the tattered, beloved sights. See you in church!

Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

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www.sweethollowpresby.org

Rev. Mary Margaret Flannagan, Pastor

Rachel Fogel, Choir Director

Secretary

Tracy Dein, Treasurer

Elders:

Lynn Burke

Ed Conroy

Tim Mason

Jim Sommermeyer

Bill Von Brook

Deacons:

Jean Cavanaugh

Barbara Martin

Niaja Mowatt

Maureen Sansone

Dan Schiffmacher

Jason Wagner

Marc Young

Other Groups & Activities:

Book Discussion

Sukey Walter

Christian Education

Carol Keil

Fellowship & Outreach & Mission

Maureen Sansone

House & Property

Bill Von Brook

Personnel

Frank Sansone

Prayer Circle

Carol Keil

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Sukey Walter

Budget & Stewardship

Jim Sommermeyer

Women For Women

Maureen Sansone & Sukey Walter

Worship

Joan Sommermeyer

Youth Group

Pastor Meg Flannagan

Church Historian

Bill Walter

Bell Ringer Editor

Bill Chamberlain

Prayer Corner

By Carol Keil

As we prepare our hearts for the birth of the Prince of Peace let us raise our prayers for Peace:

We pray for peace in war torn areas around this world. May tolerance and understanding lead the way to peace especially for the youngest victims of war living in refugee camps.

We pray for peace in our country. May factions that would seek to divide us, instead lead us to seek a common pathway toward reconciliation for the good of all.

We pray for peace in our homes. Love and understanding in families are key to building strong foundations for our children that they may grow to be fully participating members of society.

We give thanks for the church officers who have served this year and pray for those nominated to serve in the year ahead.

We give thanks to all who have pledged ongoing financial support toward the work of Sweet Hollow Church in 2020.

We continue to raise healing prayers for Tracy Dein and for William and Sukey Walter.

We continue to raise healing prayers for Carol and Otto Keil as Otto continues to be treated for pneumonia and Carol seeks treatment for her heart condition

Nursery Help Is Needed

The nursery needs an additional volunteer each week to assist Nursery Supervisor Francine James in caring for our youngest members. We have young children every Sunday, ranging from infants to toddlers.

Please contact the Church Office or Lynn Burke at 516-458-1320 or at lynburke@optonline.net to sign up.

Stewardship Sunday Is December 8th

Please keep an eye on your mailbox for Stewardship letters and pledge forms. If you don't receive one, copies will be available in the rear of the Sanctuary.

Please return your pledge forms beginning on **Stewardship Sunday, December 8th**.

Stewardship - Budget

By Jim Sommermeyer

Dear Sweet Hollow,

It is Stewardship time. It is time to plan the responsible management of our resources. We have much to be thankful for as members of the "Little Church with the Big Heart". We thank God for our staff, for our tenants and for our myriad of volunteers; Sunday School teachers, lawn mowers, music makers. We thank God for the unbridled joy of our children and the shared wisdom of our members. We thank God for the wonderful new members that continue to find us. We thank God for the roofs over our heads, abundant food and warm fellowship. Thank you all for the generous support that you have given Sweet Hollow this year! We are truly blessed to be part of a growing and caring congregation.

Our Stewardship theme this year is; "Together, we may with **one voice** glorify the Triune God." (Romans 15:6)

When we reached out to the congregation last year at this time, we were projecting a budget shortfall of \$20,000.00. Thanks to our generous congregation, donations and pledges increased. We accomplished several major property projects and withstood the loss of several tenants.

For 2020 we are projecting a shortfall of approximately \$17,000.00. We are not yet on a path to sustainability. The year 2020 is when we must make critical decisions as to the future of Sweet Hollow.

If we want to continue to be church together we must all glorify God together, all pray together, all work together and give all that we have, together; our time, our talents and our treasures. We are called to give generously and have faith that God will provide all that we require.

Please spread the good news about Jesus. Come to worship and praise the Lord! Invite your family and friends to become part of our Sweet Hollow family. Please find time for thoughtful prayer about your commitment to Sweet Hollow and return your pledge. We are asking for 100% participation to be able to budget for 2020 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Jim Sommermeyer (Chair), Lynn Burke, Jean Cavanagh, Tim Mason. Tracy Dein (Treasurer)
Reverend Mary Margaret Flannagan

All Saints Day

All Saints Day was celebrated Sunday, November 3, 2019. The Choir and Sunday School took part in the processional, singing "When the Saints Go Marching In".



Session Notes

By Lynn Burke

The Personnel Committee reported Barbara Zimmerman's resignation in July and Tracy Dein's resignation effective January 1, 2020. These two open positions presented an opportunity to change our staff structure as has been repeatedly suggested in congregational forums. The Session thus approved the following changes to our church secretary position:

- * The former Treasurer and Secretary positions will be combined into a joint secretary/bookkeeper position at 25 hours/week beginning January 1, 2020.
- * Payroll will be outsourced to an outside company. This is a minimal expense and recommended by Presbytery.
- * A Treasurer will be elected from within the congregation.

The above changes will give us more office hours, as well as increased expenses. Reductions must thus be made elsewhere in the 2020 budget, or congregational giving and property rentals must be increased. Having assessed our resources and discussed the state of our church for several years (through congregational forums, the Visioning Task Force, and other intentional conversations) discerning where God is leading us, the Session recommends reducing our pastoral position to part-time beginning June 1, 2020. This will bring significant cost savings which will easily cover the slight cost increase for the secretary/bookkeeper position.

The proposed pastoral position changes require our Pastoral Nominating Committee to resume their work. (Remember that they intentionally paused work in August 2018 in order to participate in the Project Regeneration and other discernment about what we could afford.) There will be opportunities for feedback and sharing at future congregational forums. Please join us in these conversations as we together practice faithful stewardship of God's gifts to Sweet Hollow.



Calling all angels!

All children (all ages) are invited to sing in a seasonal children's choir. We will begin weekly rehearsals on Sunday, December 1, at 9:30am. We will sing in worship on Sunday, December 22, and Christmas Eve (Tuesday, December 24, at 5pm) as attendance permits.

Prefer to play an instrument instead of sing? Talk to Pastor Meg!

Christian Education

By Carol Keil

This month as we share the story of Jesus' birth our Sunday School lessons will be using two children's picture books that show us how family history is passed along from generation to generation: ***The Name Quilt*** by Phyllis Root and ***Knots on a Counting Rope*** by Bill Martin Jr.

The children will learn about *The Jesse Tree* which uses symbols to help us remember the lineage of Jesus by learning about key people on his family tree.

The sign-up board for Sunday School Leaders and Room Shepherds is on the table at the back of the Sanctuary each Sunday. Please consider giving the children of our Sunday School your gift of service as Leader or Room Shepherd in the weeks ahead.

On Sunday December 8, the children will be making PB & J sandwiches led by Frank Sansone.

We look forward to celebrating Jesus' birth on Sunday December 22 with a special Family Worship Service followed by Birthday Party for Jesus Coffee Hour.

Families are invited to worship together on Sunday December 29 at the traditional service of Lessons and Carols.

Mission Team

By Maureen Sansone

Clothing Drive For United Veterans Beacon House-Many thanks to all those who donated new and gently used clothing, shoes, accessories and linens to benefit the United Veterans Beacon House. All items have been passed on to military families in need.

Helping Hand Rescue Mission's Thanksgiving Food Drive-Located in Huntington Station, Helping Hand Rescue Mission (HHRM) seeks to reach children that are suffering under impoverished conditions, as well as to provide families with educational and character building instruction, food, supplies and love. HHRM had reached out to Sweet Hollow, to assist them with their Thanksgiving Food Drive, which was previously held at the now-closed Best Market on Jericho Turnpike in Huntington Station. Sincere gratitude to all those who donated food items.

Sunday School is making Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwiches for Family Service League on **Sunday, December 8** with sandwiches, bottled water, fruit, and a salty snack. Donations of the following are needed on a regular basis: Arnold Brick Oven White Bread, bottled water, snack packs, crackers, and apples, oranges, and bananas. Monetary donations are also welcomed and appreciated. Funds are currently running low. Please see Frank Sansone if you're able to donate.

Project HOPE-Storm Supply Box For HiHi (Huntington Interfaith Hunger Initiative)-Project HOPE is assisting HiHi with supplies for the men who they attend to during the cold weather months. Their goal is to make five Storm Supply Boxes. Sweet Hollow plans to donate one box. Thank you to all those who have signed up to bring items. Please drop off what you have signed up to donate at the Church Office Monday through Friday, 9 am to 12 pm, or on Sunday mornings. All items must be received by no later than **December 11**.

"Box of Giving"-Please continue to consider donating items for our "Box of Giving" located in the breezeway. All non-perishable items are appreciated, as well as diapers, baby formula and hygiene products. Special thanks to Jane Beller, for bringing these donations to the Huntington Community Food Council on a regular basis.

Adopt A Family

This year, Madonna Heights is expanding their outreach. We will be adopting 12 kids ranging in age from 14 months to 4 ½ 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. Please spend from \$25 to \$35 on each child, or donate a gift card or money to contribute to our children's gifts. Gifts need to be returned, wrapped and marked with child's name **no later than Sunday, December 15**. If you have any questions please contact Sukey Walter at sukey1@me.com.

*Monte - almost 3 - boy
Spiderman toys*

*Gianna - 3 - girl
Doll or Disney doll*

*Kevin - boy
Little people toys or cute uggs*

*Mathew - 3 - male
3 little pigs toys or age appropriate cars*

*Deliah - 3 - girl
Any age appropriate Frozen toy or dress up clothes*

*Isaiah - 4 - Male. Hispanic
Lion King toys kids Christian prayer book*

*Nevaeh - 4 - female Hispanic
Minnie Mouse or Elana (Disney toy*

*Ahmira - 2 1/2 - male
Paw Patrol or PJ Mask toys*

*Tye - 2 - male Hispanic
2 Paw Patrol or PJ Mask toys*

*Victoria - 14 mos - girl
Soft doll or age appropriate toy*

*Dannilynn - 4 1/2 - girl
Dolls or paw Patrol toys*

*Nila - 17 mos - girl
doll or any Disney doll*

Women For Women

by Maureen Sansone & Sukey Walter

Women for Women (W4W) meets on the first Monday of various months from October through June (subject to change), and is open to all women at Sweet Hollow.

Monday, November 25 was the Christmas Decorating event—"Deck The Halls". The sanctuary, breezeway and Fellowship Hall were adorned with traditional decorations, while Christmas treats and favorite holiday tunes were enjoyed by all.

W4W historically has found that attendance is very light during the months of January and February, so we won't meet during those months.

Here are upcoming W4W events:

Monday, March 2-Movie Night/Dinner Night

Monday, April 6-Scavenger Hunt

Monday, May 4-Ladies Tea

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

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

Chili Cook Off / Line Dancing Fundraiser

by Mickey Rogers and Maureen Sansone

Our Chili Cook Off/Line Dancing Fundraiser, held on Saturday, November 9, was a rousing success! Attendees were treated to a night filled with six chili entries, all of them delicious in their unique ways, as well as music and energetic line dancing. Additionally, there was an array of beautiful gift baskets, a 50/50 raffle and a door prize. Approximately \$1,400 was raised!

Special thanks to Mickey Rogers and the Fundraising Committee, who planned and organized this wonderful event. Mickey's talents as a Square Dance Caller enabled attendees of all skill levels and abilities to participate, in between line dancing sessions.

Thanks to all those who cooked the delicious varieties of chili, to those who donated beautiful gourds, pumpkins, corn stalks, kale and cabbage, as well as the many church members and their family and friends who were involved in the myriad facets of planning, organizing, purchasing the admission/chili voting/gift basket raffle tickets, pre-sales of tickets, ticket sales the night of the event, 50/50 Raffle ticket sales, setting up lights for the outdoor food area, working in the food area, decorating, setting up for the event, making and bringing in baked goods, donating snacks, bottled water and soda, picking up food donations and prizes, babysitting and cleaning up. If we've left anyone out, please know how much your contributions are appreciated.



The Mittens & More Tree Is Up

The tree is ready to receive mittens, gloves, scarves and hats for the children of Tri-CYA.

Please bring your offerings and decorate the tree with them. They'll be delivered and presented to the children before Christmas.



Poinsetta Orders



Order forms are available in the church. Orders are due in the church office by Friday, December 13.

Late orders should be sent directly to Carol Keil at c1keil@aol.com, with a copy to pcshsecretary@hotmail.com.



Christmas Decorations

Women For Women (W4W) decorated the sanctuary on November 23, 2019.



December 2019

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|--|---|---------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1 First Sunday of Advent 9:30am Children's Choir 10:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship | 2 | 3 Jutta Christen's Birthday | 4 10 am Prayer Circle | 5 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal | 6 Monica & Paul VanHouten's Anniversary | 7 Rebecca VanHouten's Birthday |
| 8 9:30am Children's Choir 10:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship | 9 | 10 Fred & Janet Chacalos' Anniversary | 11 10 am Prayer Circle | 12 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal | 13 | 14 |
| 15 9:30am Children's Choir 10:00 am Sunday School 10:00 Worship | 16 7:30 pm Church Officer's Meeting | 17 Brian Schiffmacher's Birthday | 18 10 am Prayer Circle | 19 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal | 20 Nicole Schiffmacher's Birthday | 21 |
| 22 9:30am Children's Choir 10:00 am Family Service 11:15 am Birthday Party for Jesus Brianna Conroy's Birthday | 23 | 24 CHRISTMAS EVE 5:00 pm Worship 9:00 pm Worship - Candlelight Service | 25 CHRISTMAS DAY | 26 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal Laura Fallon's & Barbara Martin's Birthday Jennifer & Mike Engel's Anniversary | 27 | 28 Bill Walter's Birthday |
| 29 10 am Service of Lessons & Carols | 30 | 31 | | | | |

**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF SWEET HOLLOW**

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We're on the Web!

www.sweethollowpresby.org

BELL RINGER DEADLINE

For January 2020 Issue

Tuesday, December 17, 2019



Christmas Services

Sunday, December 22, 2019
10:00 am: Family friendly interactive service
Followed by birthday party for Jesus

Tuesday, December 24, 2019
5:00 pm: Family Service
9:00 pm: Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 29, 2019
10:00 am: Service of lessons and Carols

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