

# The Bell Ringer

## Of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

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

**December 2022**



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### *From the Pastor's Nook:*

#### **PICKLEBALL – For such a time.....**

In Esther 4:14, we read these words spoken by Mordecai to Esther, his cousin and adopted daughter:

“...And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Mordecai knew the dangerous position that Esther was in. She was a Jew living in Persia during a time when the king had decreed that all Jews were to be killed. Esther was in a unique position. After she became queen she could plead with the king on behalf of her people.

But there was a catch. Anyone who went to the king without being called was put to death. Esther had a choice. Have courage to help her people, or preserve her own life. Would she embrace faith or fear?

As Christians, we also have been born “for such a time as this.”

For me, “for such a time as this” comes with an unexpected but hope-filled opportunity. When I came to Long Island, I planned on playing pickleball as a health-focused opportunity for myself. Little did I know that it would evolve into so many other things than just a fitness activity. It has become a source of social interaction where I have made many new friends and acquaintances. I have refereed professional tournaments, organized tournaments in our community, I have become a sponsored player by one of the largest pickleball paddle manufacturers and given me a chance to help others with their health and fitness by becoming an instructor and coach. This growing sport has given me many opportunities and sometimes with growth, there can be growing pains. In pickleball, especially in our community, the growing pain is the need for more court space.

The growing pain of court space has given the church a unique opportunity to meet the community's need for court space to serve as a fundraiser for the church.

Beginning this week, the church will be renting out the CEB hall for people interested in using the space to play pickleball. Session approved this measure during the November meeting to make pickleball a fundraiser for the church, which could yield more rental income for the church than any of our tenants.

*(Continued on page 2)*



**Pastoral Column** *(Continued from page 1)*

The session had the opportunity to experience a little bit of pickleball first-hand in the hall to see how it lends itself to promoting the health and wellness of others while providing a steady income for the church. For those who have questions, I invite you to come and speak with me about this unique opportunity and to show you what pickleball is about in person.

Queen Esther took unique and unexpected action to meet the needs of her people. And God blessed her faith and boldness. Maybe, just maybe God will bless us as this unique and unexpected action to meet the needs of our community may translate into meeting the needs of our little church with a big heart?



***Some of our first  
players enjoying  
the use of our  
indoor pickleball  
court!!!!***



December 24<sup>th</sup> at 9 PM Candlelight Service  
No in-person worship on December 25<sup>th</sup>  
A Christmas message will be posted on the church's  
YouTube and Facebook pages

## FAITH FORMATION

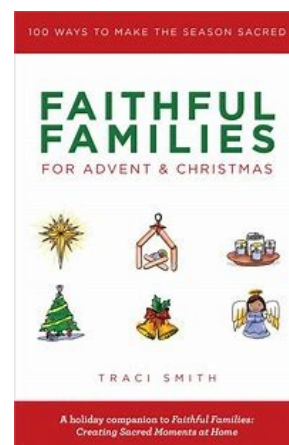
By Carol Keil

A Blessed Advent and Christmas Season to all our church families!

It is a privilege to revisit a book we first introduced about a year ago. The following introduction is excerpted from ***Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas: 100 Prayers, Practices and Lesson to Make the Season Sacred*** by Traci Smith (Chalice Press:2020 All Rights Reserved)

“The four weeks leading up to Christmas Day are called **Advent**, from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “coming” or “arrival”. It is a season of waiting and preparation before the birth of Jesus; a time to prepare our hearts and our homes for the arrival of the baby Jesus. This time of waiting invites us to take time to slow down and to reflect instead of diving headfirst into all the glitz and glitter. That we must wait for Christ to be born is a spiritual discipline and a useful practice. The message of Advent challenges a society that tells us we can have what we want instantly. Advent invites us into a time of deliberate waiting. Cultural expectations that encourage us to spend, to entertain, to hurry through the season are in stark opposition to the spiritual invitation of the season: Wait, Reflect, and Slow down.” The book, appropriate for any age family members, is full of ideas and activities to enrich our observance of the “Christmas Season” from the first day of Advent through Epiphany.

Families with young children will enjoy the beautifully written and richly illustrated book, ***’Twas the Season of Advent: Devotions and Stories for the Christmas Season***, by Glenys Nellist with illustrations by Elena Selivanova (Zondervan Press, 2021 All Rights Reserved). Written as a literary “Advent Calendar” with a verse, story, and prayer for each day, December 1 thru 24. Ms Nellist begins each day with a verse in the style of Clement Moore’s classic, *’Twas the Night Before Christmas*, followed by the scripture verse advancing the story which is then told in story format and closed with prayer. We suggest this book as an ideal way to celebrate each day of Advent with your family!



### THE LITURGICAL COLOR OF ADVENT IS ROYAL PURPLE

Advent is the beginning of the liturgical calendar for the church year. Because Advent shares many themes with Lent, the traditional color for Advent has been purple. The color purple helps us to connect the birth of Jesus to his death. Recently, a new color for Advent, Sarum Blue, has been utilized by some congregations to provide Advent with its own distinct color.

### BIBLE AND A BREW

Would you be interested in joining Pastor Wade for a beer and a discussion about the intersection of our faith and some current events? Look for BIBLE AND A BREW for 2023!!!!



### Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

(631) 367 - 9249

[www.sweethollowpresby.org](http://www.sweethollowpresby.org)

Rev. Wade Pond, Pastor

Jason Black, Director of Music Ministries

Lori Kevelos, Church Administrator

Jill Conroy, Treasurer

Monica Van Houten, Clerk of Session

Elders: Ed Conroy

Melissa D'Angelo

Niaja Mowatt

Frank Sansone

### December 2022

7 .....Rebecca Van Houten

13 .....Fred Chacalos, Jr

17 .....Brian Schiffmacher

20 .....Nicole Schiffmacher

22 .....Brianna Conroy

26.....Laura Fallon

26 .....Barbara Martin



### December 2022

6 .....Monica and Paul Van Houten

26 .....Jennifer and Mike Engel

## **STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF**

### **End of Year Giving**

No season of the year is quite like Christmas. Most of us have wonderful memories of happy family gatherings, coming home to the smell of fresh-baked cookies, the Christmas tree, the church decorated with evergreens and poinsettias, and wonderful music of the season. As a contemporary musical proclaims, "It's the most wonderful time of the year!" That's especially true of those of us who call ourselves "Christians."

We get our name from the name of the Savior born in Bethlehem. Believers in that Savior were first called "Christians" or "Christ's Ones" at Antioch. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are "Christ's Ones." We belong to him for time and for eternity. We are "Christ's Ones" because the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).

And that's why we give gifts at Christmas. When we give gifts, we are commemorating the greatest gift of all, the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Savior. And that's also why we give gifts to the Lord. Not because "poor God" needs our help to pay the bills. Not because, well, after all, it is Jesus' birthday, so we should give the Guest of Honor a present. None of that is what motivates us in our giving.

We give out of hearts of gratitude for the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. We give out of hearts of love because Christ has redeemed us and given us a new name, that of Christians. We give in response to God's love for us, knowing all that we have belongs to God.

As we come to the end of the year, the needs here at the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow are great and we face a deficit of over \$40,000. However, as we join together in a sacrifice of praise to God through our Christmas offering, we can work towards shrinking that deficit. Many workplaces offer matched giving as a holiday benefit for employees. If you have that chance, consider making the church the recipient of your matched giving! Thanks for prayerfully considering your response to God's love for you and for giving as God enables and leads in your life. May the joy of the Christ-child who became our Savior be yours.

'Yours in Christ, the Finance and Stewardship team.

**All that we have belongs to God.**

**"The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it" (Psalm 24:1).**



## STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF

### PER CAPITA NEEDS

by Jane Beller

#### ***“Why pay the Per Capita early in 2023?”***

Sweet Hollow is required to pay the \$38.95 for ***every member*** on our rolls. Therefore, 3 family members would pay \$116.85. Please consider paying your family’s Per Capita dues. If members do not earmark their per capita portion, we must take money from our budget to fulfill our responsibility towards the Presbyterian Church (USA). This payment ensures that we can easily use resources, borrow from the Presbytery office, and receive advice and support from the General Assembly.

Thank you for helping us meet OUR church’s obligation!



**Please remember each member should pay a Per Capita Apportionment of \$38.95 this year.**

#### Applying Bible Principles

Money is a neutral commodity, a means of exchange. It is neither inherently good nor evil. But a wrong view of money can become a problem to us.

In 1 Timothy 6:9-10, Scripture warns about the dangers of a determination to get rich: “But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil; and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.”

When we have a consuming desire to get rich, when we are obsessed with money so that it becomes the focus of our time and attention, then we have made it the number one priority in our lives. In that spot, it replaces everything, including God. We begin to find our security in money, not in God and in God alone.

However, when our view of God is right and our view of money is right, we will realize that money cannot buy security; money cannot purchase happiness; money cannot guarantee peace or joy or contentment. God alone can provide these essentials as we “. . . strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”

In his book, *The Gift of Giving*, Wayne Watts said this: “God always lovingly instructs us in the path that is in our best interest and which will bring us the greatest happiness in life. Therefore, for our good, God instructs us to put him first in all things, and this includes how we use our money.”

How do you view money? Is it at the center of your life, thereby perhaps replacing God’s rightful role? And equally important, are you using the money God has given to you to advance his kingdom and his righteousness?

## CELEBRATING REV. JOAN FINCK'S 20TH 'ORDIVERSARY'

The Psalms are prayers and songs that span the range of human emotion and expression. In Psalm 47, we read, "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy." On November 20th, we clapped our hands and had great joy in celebrating the 20th anniversary of Rev. Joan Finck's ordination, which I playfully coined as an 'ordiversary'. The psalmist reminds us that we need time to celebrate the good things that we experience in our lives, especially when there is distress, pain and anger. So we were blessed to have Pastor Joan lead worship and join us for a celebration with a faith community 'that was meaningful' to her. Many thanks to Frank and Maureen Sansone for setting up a lovely reception and to Bea Reiser for the photos!

By Pastor Wade



## Prayer Corner

by Carol Keil

“The Lord is coming, always coming.

When you have ears to hear and eyes to see,

You will recognize him at any moment of your life.

Life is Advent, life is recognizing the coming of the Lord.”

Henri Nouwen

Emmanuel, God with us, fill us with your Spirit this day and always. Light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love within us as we seek to hear and see you. Help us shine forth with the light of your presence.

Amen

We pray with all who mourn loved ones as we lift our prayers of comfort and consolation for the Templeton family mourning the death of Bob Templeton on October 31, 2022; our prayers of comfort and consolation continue for the family of Kathy Reiser and for the Farahat family mourning Richie.

We pray with all who seek healing as we lift prayers of comfort and strength for Rick and Linda Martin and their family as Rick remains hospitalized recovering from kidney failure.

We lift prayers of healing for Bob Gordon as he recovers from heart procedures, with thanksgiving for the care of the doctors and staff at St Francis Hospital.

We pray for strength and healing as Chris Boken continues cancer therapy and for Jane Beller as she awaits hip replacement surgery on December 5.

We join Lorine Kevelos and her family in healing prayers for her father and for her sister, Regine.

We join the Pond family in prayers of comfort and strength for Jessica’s Aunt Connie who continues to battle cancer and prayers for strength and patience for her daughter and caregiver, Colleen.

Life is Advent,

Amen

### A Prayer for Christmas Day

On this day, Gracious Lord, you come to us as Word, as light, as flesh. Teach us to know you so well that our lives may befriend this world you have made, in the name of the Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.



# 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 Tri-CYA (Community Youth Association) in Huntington.

Please bring your donations in on any Sunday and place them with the **Mittens & More Tree** up through **December 18<sup>th</sup>** where the items will be blessed and then delivered and distributed to those in need.

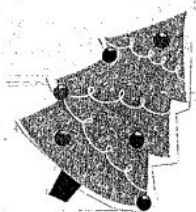
You may also drop off your donations to the church office during office hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Please call Lori in advance at 631-367-9249.



Thank you all for bringing warmth to those in need.



# TOYS OF HOPE TOY DRIVE



*\*\*\*Make a Child's Holiday*



*One They'll Always Remember\*\*\**



Please bring in new, unwrapped toys starting 11/21/22 up through 1/4/23, to benefit Toys of Hope, a Huntington Station based organization providing joy to children in the community through their toy ministry.





*The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow's First Annual Christmas Tea*

- Place:** Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow  
95 Old Country Road, Melville, New York 11747
- Date:** Saturday, December 17, 2022
- Time:** 3:00pm – 5:30pm
- Price:** \$25 per person
- Menu:** Scones, finger sandwiches, desserts
- Entertainment:** Comedian Moody McCarthy, Christmas Bingo, Dancers  
and WWHS Singers

**Pre-Registration and Pre-Payment Required**

**Cash**

**Check (made out to the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow)**

**Venmo User ID: @PCSHsecretary95**

**Email: pcshsecretary@hotmail.com**

**631.367.9249**



*Find our website and social media links!*

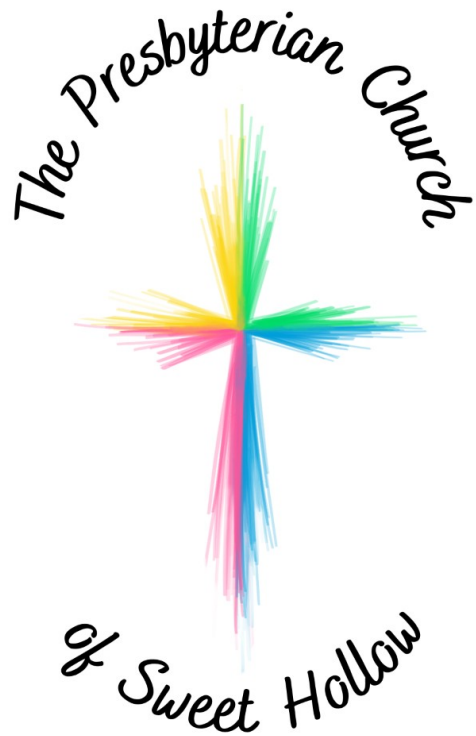
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