

The Bell Ringer



Of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

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

January 2023



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From the Pastor's Nook:

Back in Ohio, there is was a church that has a sign in their grass that says "Holy Ground". I wondered, "What makes their grass more holy than mine? Do they use anointed weed control?"

What really gets my head spinning is why a sign labels the building the church while there is not a soul inside it on many days...

The church is not a building, but a body of people with the same head: the Lord Jesus Christ. While churches have steeples, it most definitely can not be the church without any people.

It is easy for us to get enamored with our beautiful buildings and grounds and to proclaim it as the pretty white church on Old Country Road. But the buildings are NOT the church. The grounds are NOT the church.

The reality is that WE, YOU, ME, US.....WE are the church.

In 1st Corinthians chapter 3 we read these words, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? "

It seems pretty obvious to me that what we have to begin to realize is that the church is a spiritual body, made of many parts (people) and not a physical place.

The church is not the pews, pulpit, hymnals, carpet, sound system, and toilet paper are not any more sacred than the furniture in the office building or the CEB hall. This is because the church is not a building, it's people. You cannot go to the church...you are the church.

In 2023, how are WE being the church? What are WE doing to share the church with others?

On Sunday I will not go to church, but I will go to meet with the church (Acts 11:26). We meet in a building a 95 Old Country Road, there is nothing holy about the place or the things in it. If no one else meets with me and our building is burned down, the church will still exist, because the church is not a building, but people who are followers of Jesus.

FAITH FORMATION

By Carol Keil

On February 22, 2023, the season of Epiphany closes with the celebration of Ash Wednesday marking the beginning of the season of Lent. Families with children in grades Pre-K through Middle School will receive weekly at-home lessons and resources provided by Illustrated Ministry, delivered via email. Please contact Carol Keil at c1keil@aol.com or by phone at 631-219-4558 to add your email address to the weekly mailing list.

Lessons resources for the month of February are based on the following lectionary passages:

February 5: Matthew 5:13-20 You are the Salt of the Earth; Light of the World

February 12: Matthew 5: 23-24 God calls us to Live and Love

February 19: Matthew 17: 1-9 The Transfiguration

February 26: Matthew 4: 1-11 Jesus in the Wilderness

WORSHIP NOTES

The Lenten season for this year begins in the month of February. The beginning of Lent is traditionally marked by the observation of **Ash Wednesday**. On Wednesday February 22nd, we will observe Ash Wednesday with a prayer service and the imposition of ashes. The time of the Ash Wednesday worship is at 7 PM. Feel free to join this in person worship as a way to start the holiest time of the Christian year, as we contemplate our lives trying to develop a more intimate relationship with our triune God.

“Remember that you are dust, and dust to shall return.”



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

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

February 2023

- 2Jean Cavanagh
- 3Jason Wagner
- 8Marc Young
- 15Nikesha Phipps
- 21Audra Schmitt
- 22Scott Manning
- 23Kira Sansone
- 27Jazlynn Pond



February 2023

No anniversaries this month! However, there are some fun days this month...

- 1 ... National Dark Chocolate Day
- 2 ... Groundhog Day
- 9 ... National Pizza Day
- 11 ... National Make a Friend Day
- 14 ... Valentine's Day
- 17 ... National Random Acts of Kindness Day
- 20 ... President's Day

SESSION MEETING!

The session meets monthly, on the third Monday of each month at 8 PM. Most meetings occur via Zoom. In person meetings February/May/September/November.

Any member of the church is welcome to attend. Ask Pastor Wade for details.

STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF

There are some wonderful principles in the Old Testament that apply to present-day Christians. One of these is in Deuteronomy 8:10-18. Stated in contemporary language, it says, “When you have eaten and are full, and when your cars, houses and bank accounts multiply, don’t forget where it came from: Remember the Lord your God.”

In truth, all that we have comes from God. God determines what we will receive, whether it be money, gold, silver, houses, land, bank accounts, stocks, bonds, etc. It all belongs to God in the first place, and he entrusts it to us. According to David’s prayer in 1 Chronicles 29, riches, honor, power, and wealth all come from God.

That’s why there is no such thing as a self-made man or woman. Oh, we have to do our part. God’s plan is not that we just sit around praying and reading the Bible all day long so that what we need to survive will miraculously drop into our hands. We’re not just to pray for our “daily bread,” but we’re also to get up each day and work for it! That’s why the Apostle Paul stated clearly, “Anyone unwilling to work should not eat” (2 Thes. 3:10). But in reality, the amount of money and wealth which we receive is determined by God. According to his divine will and knowledge, God entrusts to each of us the amount which he knows will be best for us.

What should be our reaction to our financial state? Some might pray, “Dear Lord, you must have made a mistake concerning me and my finances. Please give me more money.” Others might try to circumvent God’s design for their lives by trying to win the lottery or to obtain large sums of money through some other means. Mature Christians, however, will realize God’s infinite wisdom far surpasses their limited perspective. They will accept with a thankful spirit what God has entrusted to them and seek to honor God by their living and by their giving.

The wealth we have is determined by God.

“But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:18).

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.



THE WAYS WE GIVE

While we are called to give through our offerings of money, we are also called to give in other ways. One of those ways is in the generous nature of supplying snacks and meal supplies for Tri-CYA. So thank you for your gifts that were shared out of your kindness!



ANNUAL MEETING 2023

The annual meeting for this year was held following worship on Sunday, January 29th. The minutes for the meeting are summarized below. Many thanks to our outgoing clerk of session, Monica Van Houten for these notes as well as her term of service!

A count of members present was initiated confirming the meeting requirement for a quorum of 10% of the 94 church members.

Pastor Wade thanked all those who worked on compiling the “Annual Congregational Meeting” report.

Pastor’s Report:

Pastor Wade made reference to his report and mentioned he is joyful and loves to be with the congregation of Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow as their pastor.

Budget Report:

The 2023 church budget and the local and general mission budgets was presented and noted for having already been approved by session. There were no questions concerning the budget.

The Congregational Statistics and Treasurer’s Report were provided and noted.

ANNUAL MEETING Cont'd

Committee Reports:

The reports of the following church organizations and committees were provided:

Budget & Stewardship Committee

Christian Education Committee

Fellowship and Outreach and Mission Committee

House and Property Committee

Pastoral Nominating Committee

Personnel Committee

Worship Committee

Pastor Pond requested Monica Van Houten, Clerk of Session, to moderate the pastor's compensation package. The package as proposed by session was voted on for approval and accepted.

Nomination and Election of Church Officers:

Nominees for Elder:	Frank Sansone	second three year term
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	Ed Conroy	second three year term
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Nominee for Clerk of Session:

	Beatrice Reiser	new three year term
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Prayer Corner

by Carol Keil

Creator, Healer, and Consoling God, we humbly gather, raising prayers that we might have the strength and wisdom to do your will in midst of all that would deter us.

May we live out these words of Micah 6:8 and Prayer of St Francis of Assisi (Prayer for Peace) as we approach the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine:

"But God's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in humankind.

It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love,

And don't take yourself too seriously---Take God seriously."

Micah 6:8 (Eugene H Peterson translation)

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

Oh, divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

A Prayer for the New Year

Dear God, thank you for the ways you are with us last year. In this new year, guide us Lord. Help each of us, in the ways we need. Hear us in our prayers. Amen.

MISSION & MORE

MISSION TEAM FOCUS FOR FEBRUARY

Souper Bowl of Caring

Please help support the Souper Bowl of Caring 2023 campaign February 5-26, 2023.

Each February since the 1990's Sweet Hollow Church has joined with other churches and youth groups in our community to collect monetary donations, non-perishable foods, baby diapers and baby formula to aid the hungry and hurting families served by the Huntington Community Food Council. Food insecurity is an issue too many families in our local community face each day.

Though Souper Bowl of Caring is a nation-wide event, all proceeds are collected to serve families in need in local communities where the donations are gathered.

The Souper Bowl of Caring movement began as an idea of the senior high youth group of Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC in 1990, when they were inspired by this prayer offered by seminary intern Brad Smith: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat."

Since 1990 donations worth well over \$153 million dollars has been collected for soup kitchens, food banks and other charities in communities across the country.

Sweet Hollow Church is proud to carry on the Souper Bowl of Caring tradition!





Shoe Drive... collecting new and gently used footwear

COMING IN MARCH!!!!!!!



Program Update

February 20 will mark the last day of the Amazon Smile Program as Amazon is shutting down the program. Thank you for willingness to try something new and participating. In the last year, those individuals who designated our church to be the recipients of this special opportunity spent roughly \$67,000 on Amazon and helped us to receive over \$335 in 'free' money.

To help our church transition out of the program, Amazon will be providing us with a one-time donation equivalent to three months of what we earned in 2022. We will still be able to accrue additional donations until the program officially closes in February. We are looking into and considering another program, Raise Right, where buying gift cards will bring in money.

If you have other fundraising ideas, please contact Pastor Wade or Jill Conroy to share your ideas!!!!!!



Special Offering For Ukraine

Session has approved a request by the Mission Team for a **Special Offering** to be held through P.D.A. (**Presbyterian Disaster Assistance**) for **Ukraine**, as the one year anniversary of the crisis approaches.

This **Special Offering** will occur for the four (4) Sundays in February. Envelopes for this offering will be available in the pews during the month of February. For cash donations, please write your name on the envelope. Checks are to be made payable to the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow. On the memo line of your check, please mark P.D.A. for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Thank you all for your generosity of spirit.

Find our website and social media links!

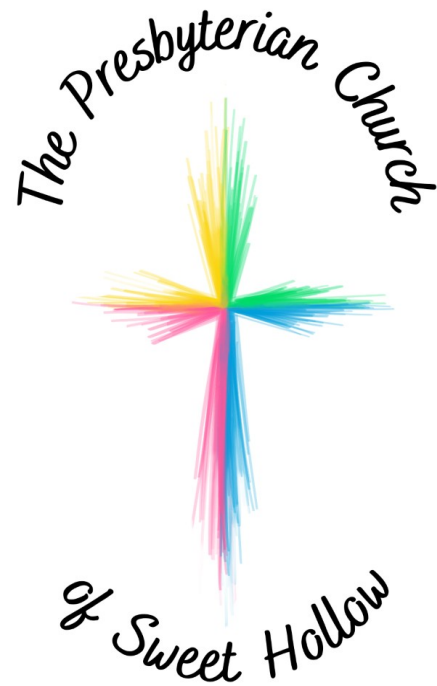
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<https://youtube.com/presbyterianchurchofsweeth1401>

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



THE LITURGICAL COLORS OF FEBRUARY ARE GREEN & PURPLE

This February begins with green as the first liturgical color of the month as we are in the midst of “common” time in the church but the color choice is also meant to reflect growth! On February 22nd, the color will shift to purple as the season of Lent begins, with Ash Wednesday. The season of Lent is observed for 40 days (not counting Sundays), leading up to the events of Holy Week.

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, and it will reduce the time needed to print, collate and label your copy. It will also save the cost of postage if you are not in church to pick up your copy.