

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:

STARGAZING

What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out. (Eugene Peterson, The Message, John 1:4-5)

Each of us has a precious gift (some have many!) to carry and place before God. Just like the magi, most of the time we are not certain where this will take us. God does provide sign to guide us if we have the courage to follow. Once we have been with Jesus, we are changed and it is not safe to go back on the same path. The church learns this as the magi follow the star to arrive at the manger. Throughout history, this has come to be known as Epiphany. According to tradition, twelve days after the birth of Jesus the magi arrive, offering gifts and their worship.

Just like the magi, we too have a star to follow. God has a plan for each of us (individually and collectively), a way to draw closer to God and to help us live our lives abundantly as intended. This is easier said than done. Figuring out exactly where we are to go, what our gifts are, and then finding the courage to go may take a lifetime for some people. In our impatience, we strain to see the path all at once. In reality, God often reveals only one step of the path at a time. Epiphany reminds us of the journey, a call to obedience in recognizing where God is leading and following even when we haven't

a clue as to the final destination.

Where does the star lead you? Where does it lead us? What is blocking our view of the star?



FAITH FORMATION

By Carol Keil

We observe the season of Epiphany from January 6 until Ash Wednesday ushers in the season of Lent, which falls on Wednesday February 22 this year. 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.

January lessons resources include:

The Baptism of Jesus: Matthew 3:13-17

Jesus the Lamb of God: John 1:29-42

Jesus Calls Disciples: Matthew 4:12-23

The Beatitudes: Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus' Baptism (a rap retelling of the story)

Were you there on that day when those two cousins met, On the banks of the Jordan?

It was time to get wet.

It was time for the dove, flying down from above,

And the voice calling clearly, "This man is my son!"

One cousin was John, and his mission was clear,

Prepare for the coming of the One we hold dear.

For days people came to be cleansed of their sins,

To be washed white as snow, ere their Savior appeared.

And now there he was, he was Jesus by name.

And he called out to John, "Unto me do the same".

Poor John was so nervous, he trembled, I'm sure

For his cousin, Jesus, was already most pure.

As they entered the water, it all became clear.

The Savior awaited was standing right there.

It was then the clouds parted and down the dove flew

And a voice called out loudly who that everyone knew:

This man here before them was really the ONE. The Messiah, Our Savior, Christ Jesus, God's SON!

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

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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

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- 8Bill Von Brook
- 10Jennifer Engel
- 16Kirvin Engel
- 17Timothy Schiffmacher
- 22Owen Moder
- 23Wyatt Wagner
- 30Wade Pond
- 31Bill Chamberlain



January 2023

No anniversaries this month! However, there are some fun days that you may wish to celebrate...

- 3 National Chocolate Covered Cherry Day
- 8 National Bubble Bath Day
- 15 National Bagel Day
- 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 24 ... National Peanut Butter Day
- 31 ... National Hot Chocolate Day

ANNUAL MEETING!

Sunday January 29th, following worship.
Look for the annual report and agenda one week prior to the meeting!

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 toys for children that may not experience an abundant Christmas like many of us experience. So thank you for your gifts of the toys that were shared out of your kindness!



FIRST ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TEA

Jill Conroy

Our “little church with the big heart” went all out for their first annual “Christmas Tea” – held on December 17, 2022. The room was filled with beautiful poinsettias, white lit Christmas trees and a host of other holiday décor.

Tea, mocktails, scones and other desserts were served. The church had a soloist performing a selection of songs for the holiday as guests arrived to the event. The event was open to all, including non-members. Seniors from the Town of Huntington were encouraged to attend, as well as family and friends of our congregation.

Our very own Niaja Mowatt, moderator for the evening, welcomed everyone to the event and thanked ALL that donated prizes, trees, wreaths, baskets and time! Ed Conroy, one of our Elders, led us in prayer before the festivities began. To start off the event, comedian Moody McCarthy performed. Anyone who saw his performance had a smile from ear to ear and a stomach that hurt from laughing. Critics say that laughing is the best medicine and that each day you should “laugh until you belly hurts and then just a little bit more.”

After some well needed laughter, the group played a Holiday Bingo game where we had a winner from the Town of Huntington Seniors group. A nice bottle of wine was given as a prize. No one ever says no to a good bottle of wine.

After the bingo, we were truly blessed to see the North Shore Dancers perform their holiday dance routine. The girl’s costumes were gorgeous and the dancing was spectacular. The audience was in awe at the performance. In fact, the girls received several rounds of applause and a standing room ovation when exiting the CEB Hall.

And to round out the evening, everyone played several rounds of Bingo. We actually ran out of gifts to give the attendees so we ended up raffling off all the Christmas trees and poinsettia plants. The fundraiser was a total success and raised almost \$3,000. The committee members would like to thank everyone from the church who donated money, sandwiches, scones and time to make this event such a success.

The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow will most definitely be planning a 2nd Annual Christmas Tea in 2023.

God Bless and Happy New Year.

Pictures of the event are on the next 2 pages. Photo Credit—Monica Van Houten

FIRST ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TEA



FIRST ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TEA



Prayer Corner

by Carol Keil

“We are — we could be — people of your light.
 So we pray for the light of your glorious presence
 as we wait for your appearing;
 we pray for the light of your wondrous grace
 as we exhaust our coping capacity;
 we pray for your gift of newness that
 will override our weariness;
 we pray that we may see and know and hear and trust
 in your good rule.”

That we may have energy, courage, and freedom to enact your rule through the demands of this day. We submit our day to you and to your rule, with deep joy and high hope.”

From the poem “Epiphany” by Walter Brueggemann

We pray with gratitude and thanksgiving for the life of Bill Chamberlain as we join his family in prayers of remembrance of a life well lived and for the time and talents Bill so graciously shared with the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow.

Our prayers continue for all who seek healing. May they find comfort and strength.

We pray with hope for the year ahead as our “Little Church with the Big Heart” works to serve in Jesus’ name, in support of our World, our Community and our Fellowship. We pray that wisdom, strength, and love will guide us.

We pray with thanksgiving for time, talents, and dedication of our church officers.

We pray for this troubled and weary world: Guide us as we seek to bring the LIGHT of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love from the Season of Advent into this Season of Epiphany and throughout this year. Amen.

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 JANUARY

Sharing Bags for Tri-CYA

The **Sharing Bags** for the children of **Tri-CYA** are up in the sanctuary. We're collecting healthy snacks to nourish the children who attend their after-school programs. The **Sharing Bags** are just a guide; you may add to or bring in other snacks as well. **Tri-CYA** has a full kitchen, so there's a range of food items which they'll appreciate, such as:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Chicken Noodle Soup | Tomato Soup | Vegetable Soup |
| Saltine Crackers | Ritz Crackers | Popcorn Snack Bags |
| Applesauce Packs | Pudding Packs | Granola Bars |
| Goldfish Crackers | Pasta Sauce | Spaghetti/Ziti |
| Boxes of Mac & Cheese | Juice Boxes | Raviolis/Spaghetti O's |

Please pick up a **Sharing Bag** or two and return them to the church by January 29, 2023.

The Mission Team thanks you all in advance for your generosity.





**EXCITEMENT IS BUILDING AS WE SAVE THE DATE FOR THE
"SOUPER BOWL of CARING" CHALLENGE**

"Souper" Bowl Sunday is officially February 12th of this year. **When sales are around, you can stock up on canned goods, non-perishable foods, and all the fixings for game day eating.** Items will be donated to the Huntington Community Food Council. Be part of the team and give something to boost someone's game day. Can we collect 200 items this year?!?

Hunger & Food in the US



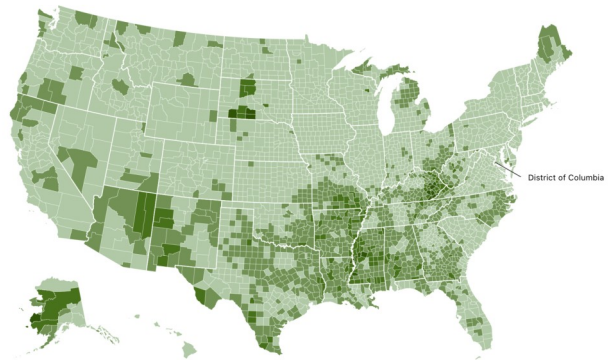
At least 80K food charities large and small
*independent and part of Feeding America Network



More than 800 college and university campuses have food pantries operating



Thousands of school food pantries feed families everyday



40M food insecure people in the US
Food Insecurity Rates 4-14% 15-19% 20-24% 25-29% 30% +

Find our website and social media links!

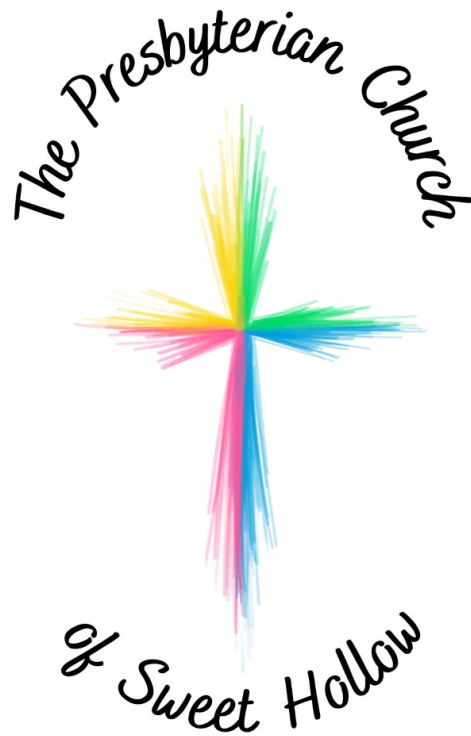
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THE LITURGICAL COLORS OF JANUARY ARE WHITE & GREEN

Every January begins with white as the first liturgical color of the month as we are in the midst of celebrating the birth of Christ, Epiphany and ending with the Baptism of the Lord (which falls on Sunday January 8th of this year). It is truly a special and holy time of the year. Beginning on January 9th and continuing until the tail end of February, the liturgical color changes to **green**. **Green** is the color that marks “common” time in the church but the color choice is meant to reflect growth!

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 <peshsecretary@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.