

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.

September 2023



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From the Pastor’s Nook:

As we approach fall, I want to share with you some thoughts on how we can cultivate healthy relationships in our church and beyond. Relationships are a vital part of our Christian life, as we are called to love God and love one another (Mark 12:30-31). However, relationships are not always easy or smooth. They require intentionality, commitment, and grace.

Here are some tips that I hope will help you build and maintain healthy relationships with God and others:

1. Spend time with God daily. The most important relationship we have is with God, who loves us unconditionally and knows us intimately. Through prayer, scripture reading/reflection and worship we can grow in faith and love.
2. Be honest and authentic with ourselves and others, without pretending or hiding. We need to share our joys and struggles, our strengths and weaknesses, our hopes and fears. We also need to listen attentively and empathetically to others, without judging or interrupting.
3. Forgive and seek forgiveness. We need to forgive others who have hurt us, as God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). We also need to seek forgiveness from others whom we have hurt, as God commands us (Matthew 5:23-24). Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness, but of strength and humility.
4. Serve and support. Healthy relationships are characterized by service and support. We need to serve others with our gifts and talents, AND we need to support others with our prayers and resources, as God has blessed us (Galatians 6:2). Service and support are not a burden, but a joy and privilege.

(continued on back page)



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS...THROUGH ICE CREAM



On Sunday August 20th, some of these photogenic people showed up to have some ICE CREAM!!!!

It was a lovely time with great people sharing tables around some awesome ICE CREAM!!!!

We are better when we gather together and we deliberately take time to share in each others lives outside of Sunday worship!

Thanks to those who enjoyed the ice cream and we shall see what happens next!



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS...THROUGH TRUNK OR TREAT

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 20TH AS THE 2ND ANNUAL TRUNK OR TREAT PROGRAM!!!!

Trunk or Treat is returning! It is a time to meet and greet our neighbors, friends and family by sharing a festive spirit and providing a safe space for families to gather some treats while seeing some tricked out vehicles!

Email Lori or let Pastor Wade know that you will need a space for a vehicle for TRUNK OR TREEEEEEAAAAATTTTT!!!!!!!!!!!!



FAITH FORMATION

By Carol Keil

September 2023

We feature three books for your consideration this month. Each addresses “navigation” in some fashion or meaning of the word... we hope you’ll find them inspiring.

Written for families with “ Young Adventurers,” *How to Go Anywhere (And Not Get Lost)* is a wonderful, informative resource for just about anyone. Beautifully illustrated and full of “hands on” activities that explore: A Sense of Direction, Nature’s Map in the Sky, Distance and Dead Reckoning, Finding Longitude, Maps and Compass, and Modern Navigation: Radio Waves from Sea to Space. This book is a terrific resource for getting out and exploring our amazing world.

In his book *My Bright Abyss, Meditation of a Modern Believer*, poet/philosopher Christian Wiman invites the reader to journey with him as he explores faith, life and death expressed in both his poetry and prose. Kathleen Norris in the New York Times called Wiman’s book “a testament to the human ability to respond to grace, even at times of great suffering, and to resolve to live and love more fully even as death draws near.” A reading group guide for this book is available at www.readinggroupgold.com.

How Sweet the Sound.: The Power and Promise of 30 Beloved Hymns by Laura L. Smith. Ms Smith shares some of the hymn writer’s stories as well as her personal experiences to illustrate the role that hymns play in exploring and amplifying our own faith journeys. Each selection concludes with “**Contemplate**”: an opportunity to reflect on the question of how the hymn applies to our experiences.

My Bright Abyss, Meditations of a Modern Believer, copyright 2013 Christian Wiman, Farrar, Straus, Giroux NY, NT 10011

How Sweet the Sound copyright 2020 Laura L Smith Our Daily Bread Publishing, Grand Rapids MI 49501

How To Go Anywhere (And Not Get Lost) copyright 2021 Hans Aschim Illustrated by Andres Lozano, Workman Publishing Co, Inc NY, NY 10014

WORSHIP NOTES

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

Mark your calendars! Sunday October 1st is widely recognized as World Communion Sunday. We will celebrate this day of diverse worship and unity along with many other congregations around the globe. World Communion Sunday began at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1933. The Rev. Hugh Thompson Kerr and his congregation sought to demonstrate the interconnectedness of Christian churches, regardless of denomination. Rev. Kerr appropriately chose the sacrament of Holy Communion to symbolize this unity.

Be sure to attend as it is sure to be a time of festive sound, brilliant colors and a unique communion experience!!!!



CALLING ALL LITURGISTS!!!!!!

One of the greatest gifts that any of us can have is the gift of helping someone else. As a pastor, there are lots of occasions where I get to experience that kind of giving, particularly on Sundays. During Sunday morning worship, I am SOOOO thankful for those individuals who have taken time to serve as a liturgist. Over the past year those individuals have included:

Frank and Maureen Sansone

Carol Keil

Niaja Mowatt

Laura Fallon

Joan Sommermeyer

Melissa D'Angelo

Lynn Burke

So I would like to say thank you to all of you and encourage any of our regular congregants to do the same!

Also, being a liturgist is not a difficult task. Pastor Wade scripts out all of the readings about 5 days in advance so you have plenty of time to look over items. If you have questions about a name to pronounce, you are always welcome to give him a call! And serving as a liturgist is something that takes just a little bit of time and the commitment is very small.

Would you please consider being a liturgist? Reach out to Pastor Wade if you may be interested or have questions!

THE LITURGICAL COLOR OF SEPTEMBER IS GREEN

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 this Fall!!!!



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

September 2023

5.....Jill Conroy, Carol Mason

9.... Susan Manning

12....Peter & Stavros Kevelos

14.....Tracy Dein

19....Kristen Conroy

21....Barbara Moder

30....Sharon Krams



September 2023

24...Beth & Nick Pereira

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. Our August meeting will be held on the 28th. Any member of the church is welcome to attend. Ask Pastor Wade for details.

STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF



Mission Commitment Sunday – Some time in November

So what in the world is Mission Commitment Sunday? Mission Commitment Sunday (MCS for short), is an expansion of our stewardship commitment. Mission Commitment is all about ensuring that we lean into our mission to be the Little Church with a BIG HEART. MCS is about sharing the load of our mission through our spiritual practices.

Our spiritual practices include (but are not limited to) things like prayer, scripture reading, giving of our financial resources, fasting and dedication to service. These are the practices that keep the church vibrant, sharing the good news of the gospel with our neighbors.

MCS allows us to provide a space for the about 200 members of the Huntington Seniors group to gather each week. MCS allows us to provide a safe space for Alcoholics Anonymous to meet regularly as these individuals continue to heal and lift up one another in their struggles. MCS helps us to ensure that we have a place to collect an abundance of clothing for veterans or to provide food for the hungry.

Mission Commitment Sunday is about all of those things and MORE! MCS is the day that we COMMIT, PROMISE, PLEDGE and ENGAGE in the practice of **HOPE**. The act of giving regularly and intentionally through our spiritual practices helps us grow in faith and become more mature spiritually. It serves as a continual reminder of God's claim on our lives. It requires us to put our own needs and wants into proper perspective, to set aside our own interests for the sake of God and others. Generosity is a tool God uses to shape our hearts. It is the active engagement of HOPE.

As the leadership of the church, we are responsible for envisioning our prayer-filled HOPE requests. Our finance team is currently working on assessing the needs for 2024.

What is in your HOPE box for the church? What is in your HOPE box for your lives? What is in your HOPE box for others? That is what your spiritual commitment is all about! We have lots of HOPE in our hearts and dreams in our heads for the church. In November, we will gather together, with HOPE in our hearts, as we share in our Mission Commitment Sunday.

Thank you,

Your Finance Team – Jill Conroy (Treasurer) Melissa D'Angelo & Pastor Wade.

STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF



RaiseRight fundraising

Our enrollment code **5J9Y6TFH7J9C**

It is all about getting GIFT CARDS. This program has Pages and Pages of participating retailers. This may be a bit overwhelming a first, but they have ways to make it simple. You can even save your favorites to get back to them fast. Once you enroll, they will send you notices of specials.

Buy gift cards and use for everyday purchases. We will be getting a better return on this than our Amazon Smile program. Each retailer lists the percentage they give back and it amazing how they sometimes run specials that add to more money for our church. Enjoy exploring and purchasing, and if you have any questions, feel free to ask Coordinator: Jane Beller




Michael's Gift Cards
(37) Up to 23.0% Off



Home Depot Gift Cards
(12) Up to 7.0% Off



Starbucks Coffee Gift Cards
(41) Up to 16.0% Off



PetSmart Gift Cards
(11) Up to 15.0% Off



Office Depot Gift Cards
(7) Up to 10.1% Off

STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF



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CHURCH GROWTH

Churches of all sizes are struggling with getting members back in church and growing their membership. Churches strive to grow because of the Great Commission.

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

In his book, [Purpose Driven Church](#), Rick Warren says “...*since the church is a living organism, it is natural for it to grow if it is healthy...If a church is not growing it is dying..*” This can be a scary concept for a small local church.

With growth comes many challenges but the exciting thing is that with God ALL things are possible and God gives wisdom freely!

Some churches don't grow simply because the leadership gets comfortable with the way things are and doesn't do anything to change the status quo.

This may be ok – but it may not be.

In our case, our Little Church with a Big Heart needs to change the status quo.

So you are invited, you are all invited, to join in our church growth movement!

Particularly, if you are called to help us discover what that growth movement should look like, then join our team! Join Pastor Wade and Niaja Mowatt (and some others) as we look to develop a plan of growth for PCSH that embraces all the things that we do well!!!!

MISSION & MORE



*** FALL CLOTHING DRIVE ***

To Benefit United Veterans Beacon House

Fall has arrived and many of us will be switching clothes for the colder weather. This is a wonderful opportunity to help local veterans with your gently used and clean clothing, shoes, accessories and linens.

Our Annual Clothing Collection Drive has started early in September to catch those clearing their closets. It will go till Veterans Day (November 11) when we shall bless the clothing that Sunday and then deliver them. Passing these items to military families in need via the United Veterans Beacon House is a wonderful idea.

Donations can be left in the sanctuary collection bin each Sunday. If you need to bring donations to church during office hours: Monday – Friday between 8am and noon, please call Lori in advance at 631-367-9249.

Thank you Sweet Hollow Congregation
The Little Church With a Big Heart
Mission Team



Prayer Corner

by Carol Keil

September 2023

We approach the change of seasons, the return to classrooms and shortening days. Our prayers turn to thoughts of change... not always welcome, sometimes yearned for: CHANGE!

“One child, one teacher, one pen, and one book can change the world.” Malala Yousafzai

“Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.” John C Maxwell

“Our dilemma is that we hate change and love it at the same time. What we really want is for things to remain the same...but get better!” Sydney J Harris

Holy One, we come before you, a community bound by our beliefs and trust in You; yet weighed down by our fears and uncertainty.

We acknowledge you are with us in every transition, in every new beginning, and at every goodbye to the life we once knew.

Be with us as we remember and celebrate the past. Be with us, as we plan for the future. Remind us to live fully in the present. Amen

We join in prayers of joyful thanksgiving with those setting off on new job opportunities. We pray for the safety and success of all students and educators returning to their classes.

We pray with those for whom change is literal. May they find peace and calm at the end of their journeys. May they know the support of our prayers surrounding them throughout.

We pray with those yearning for the blessing of healing, emotional or physical change.

We pray for all who celebrate and remember the lives of loved ones. We join in prayers for all whose lives were lost or changed forever on September 11, 2001.

We give thanks for the fellowship found within this community of faith.

Amen

Find our website and social media links!

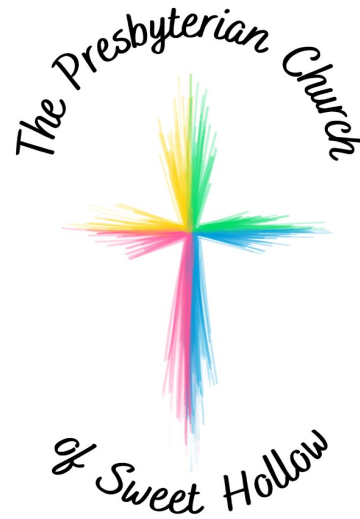
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From the Pastor's Nook (cont'd from page 1)

5. Have fun and celebrate. We need to have fun with others, enjoying their company and friendship. We also need to celebrate with others, rejoicing in their achievements and milestones. Fun and celebration are not a waste of time, but a gift from God.

These are some of the ways that we can cultivate healthy relationships in our church and beyond. I pray that as we practice these tips, we will experience more of God's love and grace in our lives.

Grow in love, grow in grace, with Jesus in your heart and a smile on your face!

Pastor Wade

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.