

Grace*notes*

Otisville-Mt. Hope Presbyterian Church Newsletter | November 2015

Stewardship Campaign

We are already in the midst of our Stewardship Campaign for 2016, sending out the stewardship letters with a copy of the budget and a brand new pledge/estimate of giving card. One of the big differences is, we are really curious about how you want to give. We have come to realize that not everyone carries cash and/or checkbooks anymore, so we are looking for ways to make giving easier and more natural.

To help us out, you can indicate on the card the way you would most like to give: still cash or a check, or by an electronic check (by going online to your bank and setting up an electronic check) or by an electronic transfer (again by going to your online bank and setting up a transfer), or by using a credit or debit card at Paypal or another service, including one that makes it possible to pay from your smart phone.

We are open to making this process as smooth as possible, including if you like, the possibility of a giving reminder, in the mail or by email, so that you can respond at home.

While the 2016 budget is up a bit from last year, around only 2% because of heating oil savings, we still do some pretty amazing and important things, and want to continue to do that at the highest possible level.

We believe that our mission in the community and around the world matters. And we want to make sure that we can offer the folks who come here all the tools they need to be able to do that.

So consider as you join us to introduce the world to the best possible news we have, the gospel of Jesus, how you want to be part! Help us help you do it your way! Thanks.

Annual Meeting

Is coming on Sunday, December 13 at 9:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall (Kafe). All members (including youth) and friends are invited to come and hear about our past year and be part of our peek at 2016!

New Members Class

There will be a New Member's Class on Tuesday, November 10 at 7:00 PM. Please RSVP the office at 386-3851 or email us (otisvillepres@hvc.rr.com). Anyone who is interested is welcome, even if you only need to ask questions and get some answers. The class is an open discussion and lasts about an hour. If you need a baby-sitter that evening, just let us know and we will arrange for one.

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YOUTH calendar

- Sun, Nov 1 - Game Night
- Sat, Nov 7 - Pets Alive
- Sun, Nov 15 - Youth in the House
- Sun, Nov 22 - Cookie Baking
- Sun, Nov 29 - Visiting Seniors

New Friends

We are always having new friends joining us for Sunday mornings and for our many activities, but don't always get names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

If you have been hanging out with us here at the church and are not yet getting newsletters (electronic or paper) or email updates, stop by the church office, give us a call, or send us an email with your info and we will add you to our list of the latest and greatest at the Otisville-Mt. Hope Presbyterian church.

Sunday School News

Sunday School is off to a wonderful start with over 50 children registered and growing. Our focus has been on "God's Special Creation" and how each one of them, and all of us, are all specially created by God for His purpose.

We are using Bible based curriculum and a new Praise and Worship Program with which we hope to create "A Joyful Desire to Serve the Lord and Others, According to His Word"

Each class has been collecting gifts to fill shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. We talked about how much joy their gifts will bring to children all over the world. The last day for this collection will be November 15th. We will also be collecting food for our Food Pantry for Thanksgiving as a way of sharing with our neighbors.

On Sunday November 29 we will celebrate the First Sunday of Advent with an Advent Party during Sunday School. The children will make ornaments for our Sunday School Christmas tree in Fellowship Hall and ornaments to give to the clients at Elant Nursing Home. Our Youth Group was delighted to see the smiles and excitement (and some tears) of these lovely adults, as they handed each one an ornament last year. How blessed we are to be able to share the Joy of the Lord with others!

Our Children's Christmas program will be on Sunday, December 13th. More information will be in our Sunday School Newsletter and in December's Grace Notes.

Annual Reports

...are due to the church office by **Monday, November 30!** Please be sure to include full reports from group treasurers and secretaries.

Members In Action

Every year the Session has the responsibility to examine the church membership to see who is active and inactive. If you haven't been around but want to be considered active, here's what you can do: come to worship and let us know you are hanging in there (or if you live far away or are housebound let us know you are watching those 90 second sermons!), make a regular financial contribution so that the work we do as a congregation is supported by you, and let us know through email, Facebook, calls, or conversations with friends that you are praying for us and for the Kingdom of God as well make it real in our community. You see, we believe all that makes a difference, and we want you to be an active part of it! Get active!

Stephen Ministry

Help, Hope, Healing

What is it? Our congregation's Stephen Ministry equips lay-people to provide one-to-one Christian care to people in our congregation and community who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. Stephen Ministry is a confidential ministry. The identity of those receiving care and everything they discuss with a Stephen Minister remain private.

Stephen Ministers Care for people facing Tough Times! We all experience challenges in life- times when we could benefit from care and support. Stephen Ministers can provide the emotional and spiritual care we need when faced with a crisis or difficulty such as:

- ◆ Loss of a loved one
- ◆ Hospitalization
- ◆ Divorce or separation
- ◆ Loneliness or discouragement
- ◆ Spiritual crisis
- ◆ Unemployment or a job crisis
- ◆ A terminal illness
- ◆ Incarceration
- ◆ Aging
- ◆ Birth, adoption, miscarriage, or infertility
- ◆ A chronic illness
- ◆ Relocation
- ◆ Recovery after an accident or disaster
- ◆ Many other life challenges

Could you benefit from the confidential, one-to-one care and support of a Stephen Minister? Contact the pastor, church office or a Stephen Minister to learn more. Call 845-386-3851 or email otisvillepres@hvc.rr.com!

Smart Finances

Think about these words from *The Little Book of Main Street Money* by Jonathan Clements. Instead of being trapped in the vicious cycle of owing everyone, start intentionally budgeting to live on less than you make and then saving with intention.

"If you start saving in your twenties and you quickly amass a chunk of wealth, you won't just clock years of investment returns. You could also lower your cost of living. After all, if you have some savings, you may be comfortable raising the deductibles on your health, homeowner's, and auto insurance and accepting a longer wait time before benefits kick in on your disability and long term care insurance. You may even amass enough savings so that your family would be okay if you died - and hence you probably won't need as much life insurance. All of this will lower your insurance costs.

"Meanwhile, your growing wealth means you shouldn't have ever have to carry a credit card balance and suffer the punishing financing charges that go with it. You may also be able to put down 20 percent when you buy your first home, so you avoid the cost of private mortgage insurance. Similarly, you might pay cash when you buy a car or, at least, hold down the amount you borrow, thus reducing the interest you pay. And when you do borrow, your burgeoning wealth and admirable credit history may mean you qualify for a lower interest rate. Also, you could avoid a slew of irritating fees, including those for bouncing checks, paying bills late, and having financial accounts below some specified minimum. You might even have enough to qualify for the fee reduction on big accounts that are sometimes offered by financial advisors and mutual funds.

"Sound appealing? It is. Instead of getting nicked and dimed in your financial life, you're in control. As you pile up some savings, you can cut living expenses. That, in turn, will give you even more money to save each month. It's a virtuous cycle - and it could put you on the fast track to financial independence."

This whole process also puts you in a position to give without worry to things that you care about passionately, whether that be the church, the school in Haiti, housing in Newburgh, or a particular world disaster. A generous heart is a calm and caring heart and living simply and saving and giving makes all the difference.

Deacons PROJECTS

Thanksgiving Baskets

Our Thanksgiving Basket program is in full operation, with preparations to give away about 40 Thanksgiving baskets. If you would like to help, see any of our Deacons, pick up a shopping list and shop (lists available in the Sanctuary), or get a turkey.

Help Wanted: 2-3 men on Saturday, November 21 9-11 AM to help with loading "baskets" into the recipients' vehicles. See Sue Petak or Elizabeth Orengo to volunteer.

Deacons Food Closet

Are you aware that our Deacons maintain a food pantry that helps provide food to needy families and individuals who are going through hard times? We put together about 3 bags of food with pasta, soup, dry cereal, and some proteins for folks who need a hand getting enough food for the lean parts of the month. If you can help, see Deacon Derrick Cash or Brenda McGregor. We also publish items that are needed in the bulletin.

Backpacks for Kids

Did you know that the Deacons provide schools with weekend meal packs for children who are going home to families where food is sometimes unavailable? We provide single serve items that kids can prepare with little to no assistance. The two day supply provides basic nutrition and calories when their school breakfasts and lunches are not available. Right now we support the Otisville Elementary and Minisink Middle Schools and looking to expand our reach in three other buildings. Together, we can "Make a Difference!"

Deacons Medical Closet

Did you know we have gently used medical equipment that the Deacons lend out to folks in need such as wheelchairs, commodes, shower chairs and more? If you or someone you know are in need, be sure to ask before you buy, order, or have your doctor or insurance company order something. We may have what you need.



Christmas Shoeboxes

Did you know that November is "Shoebox Collection Month"! Pre-decorated shoeboxes are available to be filled with special gifts for children "in need" around the world. The boxes can be obtained from any Choir member up until the day of collection, which is Sunday, November 15.

How can you help? Simply decide on an age and gender, fill the box with appropriate toys, toiletries, school supplies, etc., attach a label, and include \$7 per box for shipping. Labels will be available with the boxes. Choose from the following: Boy or Girl, ages 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14. The label brochures will specify suggested gifts and also items to avoid, such as liquids and chocolate! **Please do not seal the box closed.** Questions? See Sue Conklin, Maggie Mansfield, or any Choir member. Happy packing!

Coffee House

The next Coffeehouse will be on Saturday, November 21 at 7:30 PM. It will be an "Open Mic" with homemade "Celebration of the Harvest" desserts! Hot Coffees will be available as well as teas & apple cider. We'll have candlelit tables and great fellowship. As always there will be a "freewill" offering where you can drop a donation in the basket at the end of the event! To sing, call Sue Conklin

(845-386-8114) and to bake, see Ginny Grebeldinger!

Thanksgiving Eve

Our traditional Thanksgiving Eve service will be held on Wednesday, November 25 at 7:00 PM! Communion will be served.

2015 Art Show

Mark your Calendars now! The *Third Annual Art Show* is coming — Friday evening, **December 4** will be opening night, followed by an all day show on Saturday, December 5, and ending Sunday, December 6! We will be including a children's gallery, so if your children have done significant art works (or might do one between now and December 1st!), let the Art Show Team know.

The show is a great time to check out the talent from our congregation and community.

Please see Allison Wilbur if you are interested in showing your work...more information will be coming shortly (including ways to help with setting up the gallery for the show, using a new hanging system, and questions about lighting).

Christmas Concert

A "*Ring-in the Holiday*" concert will be presented on Saturday, December 5, from 4-5 PM in the Sanctuary with the OMHPC choirs and musicians performing a broad selection of Christmas music! Following the concert, you are invited to the lighting of the Village Christmas Tree at 5:30 PM at the Otisville Fire House. Then...Santa Claus is Coming to Town to see the children!

Refreshments will be served at the Firehouse.



Advent Decorating

It's time to joyfully prepare for the coming of the Christ child!

On Saturday, November 28 at 9:30am you can help decorate the windows, the doors and the walls inside & out of the Sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall with lights and greens, wreaths and bows, and words of Advent to help our faith grow! It's such a pleasure and good fun to gather together and decorate our church for Advent and Christmas. When the decorating is done we will have a lunch of soup and sandwiches in the Fellowship Hall!

Advent Begins

For those unaware, Advent is a season of the church where we prepare for the arrival of the Messiah, both as the Christ Child in Bethlehem, and as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords at the end of time.



The season includes four Sundays, and starts this year on Sunday, November 29, the first Sunday, and first day of Advent, which ends on Christmas Day, December 25! The season is accompanied by several rituals including Advent calendars with a tiny door to open for each day with a bible verse and often a small object to remind us of what is ahead, as well as Advent candles.

They are often arranged in a wreath, with three purple or blue candles as well as one pink one (often called the candle of "joy") one candle lit on the first Sunday, two on the second and so on.

The ritual reminds us to prepare! Prepare of course for the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child to Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem and with him the salvation of the world, as well as to prepare for the second coming of the Lord when time is finally finished. In fact the word Advent itself means "coming". Dictionary.com defines the meaning as a coming into place, view, or being; an arrival! And indeed it is!

We hope that you will make Advent a special time in your life at home, work, play and at worship as we together get prepared for the Messiah's appearing!



November Celebrations

Anniversaries

Mack & Sue Morley
Brian Farley & Rachel Colburn
Matt & Anna Gibbs
Richard & Elizabeth Orenge
Bob & Marilyn Komstedt

Birthdays

Janette Purdy
Eda Sanchez-Persampieri
Colby Butts
Thaila Fisher
Gemma Frank
Roy Brighton
Laura Bendlin
Wendy Michalek
Jayne Green
Levi Jackson
Brianna Duffy
John Robert Dullaghan
Lauren Kalantgis
Anita Goldsmith
Joshua Simpson
Benjamin Edwards
Cameron Ten Eyck
Suzanne Wicke-Coamey
Jane Brighton
Shannon Seymour
Olivia Worden
Daniel Defazio-Schultz
Kimberly Hynes
Elizabeth Clark

Bible Versions

For folks who are unfamiliar with the story of the bible as we use it currently in worship and Christian education here are some tidbits that might be interesting:

- ◆ The Old Testament when written (first it was transmitted orally) was written in Hebrew we believe, a Semitic language of the Eastern Mediterranean lands.
- ◆ It was written on scrolls of leather (or parchment) which were rolled up for safe keeping. Long books like Isaiah got their own scroll. Short books were put together on a single scroll, like the minor prophets Jonah, Micah, and Hosea.
- ◆ The first five books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are called Torah in the Jewish tradition. The Old Testament is the Hebrew bible.
- ◆ The Hebrew bible was translated into several languages local to Israel, including Syriac and Greek (the Greek OT is called the Septuagint)
- ◆ At the time of the New Testament most folks in Israel would have spoken Aramaic, a kind of common Semitic language kind of like Hebrew, as well as read (at least the men) Hebrew. But many also spoke, read and wrote in Greek after the conquest of that area by Alexander the Great in @ 300 BC.

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- ◆ The New Testament was almost entirely written in Greek, though with pieces in Aramaic and was later translated into many languages including Latin as the Christian faith grew in the Roman Empire.
- ◆ In Western Europe, the bible stayed written in Latin basically until the Reformation, when copies were made into the common languages of emerging countries like German, French, English and other languages.
- ◆ Also during the Reformation in around 1500 AD scholars realized by comparing different translations of the bible, they could often straighten out odd mistakes made by copyists, as well as fix bad translations or readings that didn't translate well from one language to another.
- ◆ After the printing press, bibles became much more readily available. Additional translations were made into English and translations were updated with specific concerns about accuracy to the original text and readability.
- ◆ For most church activities we use the Contemporary English Version (1995) with its primary concern being readability. It is written for a fourth grade reader, as well as being based on a version that is easily republished in hundreds of languages.
- ◆ We also occasionally use the New International Version (2011) in Bible studies for example, with its greater focus on textual accuracy. Both versions are helpful so we can know what the bible says, in a way we can understand.

Crazy cool I think!