

A Few Minutes

First Presbyterian Church of Gilbertsville ~ 113 Marion Ave. ~ PO Box 314 ~ 13776

Pastor's Notes for November 2019—"We Believe" Sermon Series Wraps Up Just in Time for Christmas

BIRTHDAYS



24-Mallory Robinson
 Jeff Halbert
 27-Carol Presby
 30-Debbie Pearsall



DECEMBER

1-Elizabeth Nields
 6-Tim Sloan
 9-Shirley Keene
 Paul Loitsch
 10-Garrett Proskine
 17-Arlene Daniels
 19-Jim Pochy
 20-Alan Presby
 24-Penny Haynes
 27-Linda Wing
 29-Carol Ainslie

Our exploration of the Brief Statement of Faith - this wonderful, detailed, LONG, and anything but brief creed of our reformed Presbyterian faith wrapped up in November. For those who took the journey weekly, I hope it was time well spent and that you've found your faith deepened by it just a bit. For those who may have missed the series - in part or in whole - please find below a verse by verse synopsis of our weekly teachings. (This month we pick up with Section 3 of the Creed - Sections 1 and 2 were covered in the September newsletter issue.)

Enjoy and be blessed!

Pastor Mark

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father. In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community.

Reflect: What does it mean to be "created in God's image?" What does it mean for ALL people to be created equal? How are we as Christians to respond and lean into our trust in our Creator, Abba Father while seeing and honoring God's image in us?

But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet...

Reflect: As the old hymn "Come Thou Font of Every Blessing" says, we are all "prone to wander." That is, we all understand the seriousness of sin - and our need for confession. And you don't need to wait until church on Sunday - you can turn your prayer to confession - and tune your heart to God's assurance of forgiveness - today.

Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation. In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.

Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.

Reflect: What is the best way that we may cause God to say of us: "I sure am one proud parent!" (I'll give you a hint: It starts with an "L" and it ends with an "OVE!")

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and re-newer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church.

Reflect: How do we breathe in the Holy Spirit? How do we trust in the Holy Spirit in us to guide us as a church? How have you felt the presence and the power of the Spirit in your life and in the life of the Church? Where has it led you/us?

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church.

Reflect: How has sharing in words, water, and wonderful meals brought you closer to others? How have the Word of God, the Waters of Baptism and the Wonderful Meal of Holy Communion brought you closer to God?

In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

Reflect: What is justice? Is it just the bad guys getting punished and the good rewarded? Or does Biblical justice call us to seek something more - something deeper – something universally rewarding? How might the Church and every Christian – enflamed by the Holy Spirit – work to assure justice every day for all people?

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Reflect: What are some ways that we strive to serve Christ every day - as people and as a small church? How do we perceive the "little things" in the grander scheme of God's BIG purposes for us and for the world?

With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reflect: Who has inspired you by living out the language of our faith? Pause, pray and give thanks today - for the saints who have shown you the way - and for just the opportunity every day to live into our wonderful life of faith as Christians.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!! Prayers for all for a wonderful, thanks-filled Thanksgiving holiday.

A special service for the community in the spirit of Christian unity will be on Sunday, Nov. 24 at the Baptist Church at 4 PM. All are invited. See weekly bulletins for details.

ADVENT IS COMING SOON – DON'T MISS IT!

The season of Advent begins December 1. It's a short season this year. We only have 24 days to get ready for Christmas! And no, I don't mean 24 days to get all the shopping, baking and card writing done. I mean 24 days to prepare our hearts for celebrating the birth of Jesus – God's Son.

In such a fast-paced, multi-tasking world, 24 hours doesn't seem like much time at all, does it? We all need to be intentional to tune in with the Spirit and the true reason for the season. There are many ways to set time aside during Advent to do just that – and I hope to see you all at one, two, or more of these opportunities intended to help us be truly blessed by the birth of the Christ child this Christmas:

SPECIAL COMBINED SERVICE IN GARRATTSVILLE – Sunday, Dec 1 at 9 AM – Head North in the first Sunday of Advent for our annual combined service with our friends in shared ministry. We'll help them hang the greens and decorate the tree.

Sunday Worship Services – 11 AM – Lighting the of the Advent Wreath, Special reading, music and prayers, and building up the Creche week to week.

COMMUNITY ADVENT STUDY – Wednesdays beginning Dec. 4 at Christ Church—6:30 Soup and Salad Supper; 7 PM Study – Let's join with our friends in shared faith as we look at Max Lucado's *Because of Bethlehem*. Please let Pastor Mark know of your interest.

CHRISTMAS EVE – 5 PM –This Year at Our Church! Let's welcome the whole community to our church this year for a blessed community Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols. Special music and children's message. More info to come – but already start to spread the word and make plans to come. All neighbors, family, and friends invited.

OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS DATES/TIMES TBA (Check Facebook and church bulletins):

-BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE – Special service for those who may be grieving this Christmas season. Special prayers and candle lighting service helps bring peace to troubles hearts.

-LIVING NATIVITY – An effort is underway to bring a unique living nativity experience to the village in December.

MANY HEARTFELT THANKS

Friends, just a note of thanks and a prayer of thanksgiving for all of you and your generous Pastor's Appreciation card and gift. Please know the greatest gift I have is knowing and serving with all of you. May God bless each of you this Thanksgiving/Advent/Christmas season. - PM



More Heartfelt thanks to

- The Harvest Supper team and the many contributors to a monumental effort. Just when we wonder how it can possibly all get done, it's over for another year, and delicious, as always. Special appreciation to team captain, Roberta Halbert, for her leadership as well as for her other fundraising projects, including chocolates, cutlery, and calendars.
 - The property committee for coordinating the removal of the trees in cooperation with our neighbors next door.
- Pastor Mark for leading us in deepening our understanding of the Brief Statement of Faith through his sermon series and special studies.
 - All who keep our building safe, clean, and comfortable.
 - Those who volunteer time and energy for offices and duties or who donate to our many projects and causes.
 - The shoeboxes that will make smiles appear on little faces somewhere on Earth this holiday season.

CONGRATULATIONS to

- Roberta for being honored by the Gerald Eastman Award at State Grange, This award is present to an individual member who exemplifies Christian principles and influences others in a positive way.
- Sam Piedmonte for being Senior of the Month at GMU.
- Beth Keene for her new job and return to Gilbertsville full time.
- Aimee Piedmonte for her summer study at the Smithsonian—a true honor for her to have been chosen to attend.
- Garrett Proskine for graduating to rehabilitation and for continued hard-won progress in recovery.

~~Roberta's Corner~~

PW Christmas Luncheon—All women are invited to attend the annual PW Christmas Luncheon at 12 noon on Saturday, December 7, in the church dining room. Bring a dish to share and your holiday spirit. Helen Palen will lead a program of interest about Christmas carols. Let's make this a time of warm fellowship for all.

HARVEST SUPPER

A big "THANK YOU" to each and every one who helped in any way to make this major 2019 fund raiser a huge success. It takes the commitment of many people to say "YES," starting in late August when the planning committee meets until the lights go out and doors are locked the night of the supper.

The final tally showed 158 adults along with 7 children getting take outs and 80 adults being served in the dining room. There were also 30-35 helpers choosing from what was left for their meal.

The Garrattsville Church also received \$500.00 for providing squash, pies, and willing workers the day of the supper. After expenses, the final figure showed \$2217.11, including monetary donations from our church members as well as from our diners.

As we all get older, what will be your personal commitment & obligation in making this annual supper continue to happen at the Presbyterian Church? Maybe going forward, the answer might be to have only take outs.

The Main Committee: Roberta Halbert, Barb Hill, Jan Costello, Cathy Osborne and Judy Veenhof

Collections for GMU

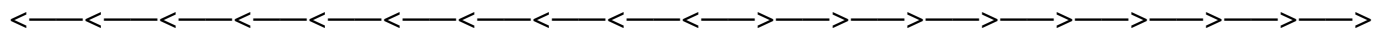
Box tops and pull tabs are still being collected for GMU. These items can be placed in the appropriate container on the table in the back of the sanctuary. Please be sure to check the expiration date on the box tops before placing them in the container. If the date is close to expiring or has, they can't be redeemed. REMINDER: CAMPBELL LABELS are no longer being collected as this program has been discontinued.

November Coffee Hour—Unfortunately due to the limited amount of food left from the harvest supper, we will not be having our turkey dinner the Sunday before Thanksgiving. We will have a regular coffee hour on the 17th instead.



>>>>**Volunteers** are needed for coffee hour through June 2020. Please check your schedule and consider placing your name on the sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex.

ADVANCED NOTICE - This year, our church is the HOST for the breakfast following the Sunrise Service on April 12. Please contact Roberta if you would be willing to assist with this community event.



Seasonal decorating of the church sanctuary will take place on Thursday, December 5, at 9:30 am. All helpers will be welcomed and appreciated. Our worship during the Advent and Christmas seasons is enhanced by our tradition of beautifying our space to the glory of our Lord.

✿ Operation Christmas Child—It is time again for Operation Christmas Child/Samaritan's Purse. Here's what to do:

- Pack a shoe box for a boy or girl—age level designated—and bring to church by November 24.
- If wrapping, the box and lid need to be done separately. You may use a cardboard or plastic box.
- Please secure lid to box with a rubber band.
- NO liquids, toothpaste, or chocolates permitted.
- The Mission Committee will pay shipping cost.
- Labels and information are available in the narthex. Questions—contact Shirley Keene or Susie Pochy. Thank you for putting a smile on the face of a child!

Senior center addresses—they would love to hear from you!

Evelyn Butler, 73 Lyndon Lane, Haw River, NC 27258
 Barbara Butts, Chase Nursing Home, 1 Terrace Heights, New Berlin, NY 13411
 Joanne Rowe, Arlyn Wade, NRNC, 88 Calvary Dr. Norwich, NY 13815

New locations for these folks, whom we miss:

Bruce and June Huggins, 686 Pear Drive, Fruita, CO 81521
 Richard and Arlene Daniels, 1 Buntline Drive, Room 104, Stamford, NY 12176
 Lucas Piedmonte, McDowell Hall #518-A, 4400 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20016-8106
 Garrett Proskine, Sunny View Rehabilitation, 1270 Belmont Ave, Room 365/Garrett Proskine, Schenectady, NY 12308

Prayer Concerns : The Bahamas, California (wildfires), anyplace suffering natural disasters, Scott Bedics, John Birdsall, Butch Gage, Evelyn Butler, Barbara Butts (Chase Nursing Home), Jim Carr, Richard Crocco (for his move to Arizona!); Emma Conklin (Angel's baby daughter), Arlene & Richard Daniels, Sophie Dixon, Janet and Dennis Farbent, Rose Foster, Hilary & Bill Fuller, Katie Gross's friends (Dalton and unnamed), Carol Henkel (Nancy Meyers' Mom), Steve Hughes, Bill Hultz (father of Piedmonte friend), Family and friends of Ron Ketchum and Brooke Ketchum, Pat Kuhn, Tim Meyers and family; Janet Nelson (Hampshire House), Nelson Park, Debbie Piedmonte, Larry Polsky, Garrett Proskine (Zach, Amy, Lauren & Dalton; Hill & Proskine Families), Jane Robertson, Joanne Rowe, Sue Sebeck, Nona Slaughter, Bob Stearns, Family of Bobbie Stensland, George Stockdale, Sarah Tyler, Baby Eden Ver, Vicktor & Kayla Ver, Arlyn Wade, Chuck Wade, Family of Tom Waterhouse (Prayer requests: contact Nancy Meyers at rjmnlm@hotmail.com.)

-----Clip and Post!!-----

Week of	Open/close	Ushers	Liturgist	Communion	Coffee Hour	Lamb's Closet
Nov. 3	Judy	Judy and Dean	Dean	Jake, Don, Rose, Susie	X	11/2-Cathy
Nov. 10	Mary	Mary and Theresa	Nona		X	11/9-Theresa
Nov. 17	Bill	Jan and Bill	Judy		Theresa and Cathy	11/16-Mary
Nov. 24	Nona	Helen and Bud	Aimee		X	11/23-Judy
Dec. 1	@ Garrattsville	@ Garrattsville	Elizabeth	Need one: Glenn, Bill, Nancy, Mary	X	11.30-Rose
Dec. 8	Susie	Susie and Jim	Jake		X	12/7-PW
Dec. 15	Roberta	Helen and Bud	Jan		Bud and Helen	12/14-Roberta
Dec. 22	Mary	Mary and Laura	Dean		X	12/21-Susie
Dec. 29	Bill	Jan and Bill	Jan		X	12/28-Closed`

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