

The Grapevine

A monthly newsletter of
The Presbyterian Church of Okemos

December 2018; Volume 18, Issue 12

Some Thoughts on Faith

Years ago we planted a Witch Hazel Tree in our back yard. We stumbled on this genus—*Hamamelis Virginiana*—not realizing that it was a plant that blooms and grows following the liturgical calendar more than nature's calendar.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus says that the kingdom of God grows like a small seed into the greatest of all *shrubs*. Naturalists call witch hazel a shrub rather than a tree—a shrub that grows to 15 or 20 feet tall. Like other deciduous trees, its leaves turn color and fall every autumn, but in the dead of November, this shrub/tree does something unusual: it blooms. Bare branches are covered with a delicate yet hardy yellow flower that survives the high winds and blowing snows into the winter. When everything else in the garden is dead and gone, this shrub dares to bloom.

The church's calendar makes a similar leap of faith. The new year begins, not with Christmas, but with Advent, a full month before Christmas. As daylight hours grow shorter, as temperatures drop and nothing seems to grow, Christians place their hope in the God

who makes all things new. We look to prophets through whom God has promised to do something new, something unheard of; prophets who promise flowers in the wilderness, a straight, smooth way instead of a rough road.

Each Advent season, our refrain is: "Come, Lord Jesus; come and save us." But most of the time, we are thinking about Jesus arriving in history, the birth of the baby, the adoration of shepherds, magi, and angels. Seldom do we say *Come, Lord Jesus* and anticipate

the future—our future. We don't like to think of it or speak of it, fearing that such talk would make us sound like religious fanatics instead of the reasonable Christians we imagine ourselves to be. But as Karl Barth puts it: "We live with constant reminders that Jesus is ahead of us assuring our righteousness and holiness; nevertheless our own unrighteousness and unholy are still behind us in ever new forms and with only too powerful a grasp."

The apostle Peter asks the question of the season: What sort of persons ought we be, how shall we live, waiting for and hastening the coming day of the Lord...

when there will be a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells." Finding a balance between waiting and hastening is the challenge of Advent. The hastening, the action part of that equation is what we understand best. Tear down the old building, open up a new branch, repave the parking lot, start a new Stewardship campaign, get things moving—these things we understand. But what is the point of waiting?

The point is that no one can bring about the new heaven and earth except God. So we wait, and call upon the Lord: "Come, Lord Jesus. And in the meantime—the only time we have to live in—we light our lamps in the darkness, we do the works of the day—works of light, ministry to prisoners, sandwiches for the hungry, housing for low-income families, education for those who cannot afford it, birthday parties for children who have no parties, gifts for the strangers, music for those whose lives have no music.

Here's an Advent story from a few years ago. Picture a tidy residential cul-de sac, a dozen tidy houses. Most of these homes are Gentile, but one home is Jewish and on a December night, that home has a menorah shining in the window celebrating Hanukkah. One night, vandals smash that window, remove the menorah, throw it on the ground, scribble a swastika on the side of the house. The next night—the very next night—every house on the street has a menorah burning in its window, lamps shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in the hearts of us all.

This story has been enacted in more than a few cities and suburbs over the last decade. It doesn't happen spontaneously. It requires people talking to one another, determined to do something. A lot of little actions, little decisions, little sacrifices; lots of different people had to make quick decisions to either do something or remain silent and dark.

We stand on the threshold of God's kingdom. We can go dormant, or we can decide to bloom with delicate yet hardy flowers in the midst of this darkness. God's future still approaches, the future in which all things are made new, Christ's promise is sure; he will come. We make ready for him by lighting whatever little lights the Lord has put in front of us. No light is too small to be used by him—action in waiting, pointing ahead, looking to Christ and for Christ. Even our smallest lights will be signs in this world, lights to show the way of the Lord. See you in Church,



JOYS & CONCERNS

Giving thanks for:

The birth of Dexter Wells Polun, to Dana and Brendan, and big brother Archer on November 18. Grandparents include Michele and Jeff Arbour.

The weddings of Roger and Jessica Horstman, on October 26, and Thomas and Yvette Horstman on November 3. Parents include Laurie and Jack Horstman.

Please hold in prayer:

Caroline Chao
Ardith DaFoe
John Geske
Mary Lou Gifford
Mary Kaye Goldbatt
Mary Lou Hatfield
Lyleen Haller
David Hoekstra
Wally MacLean
Phil Prygoski

Our sympathy to Michele Arbour on the death of her mother, Edith Barton on November 8.

Alternative Christmas Gift Fair

Members and friends will once again be able to purchase gifts and make donations in honor of friends and family at the Presbyterian Church of Okemos Alternative Christmas Gift Fair on December 2 from 11:15 until 1:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall. Organizations will include Haitian Artisans For Peace, Cass Social Services, Advent House, Global Institute of Lansing, Solar Circle, Simbolei Academy and others. Gifts will include handmade soaps, greeting cards, nativity sets, jewelry and other gift ideas.

Please join us on December 2 to prepare for the holidays in the spirit of loving generosity.

Thank you all for sharing the wonderful church recipe book in celebration of our wedding. I am so grateful for all of the love and support that I have received from this congregation throughout my childhood and into adulthood. We cannot wait to dive into some of these recipes as husband and wife!

- *Kate (Grady) & Colin Hudson*

The Mission Committee again thanks Dr. Eric Eby for the thoughtful donation of toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss for PCO's Christmas Giving Tree. Dr. Eby, whose Okemos office is not far from our church, has supported this project for a number of years.



CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES CALENDAR

December

- 2 Normal church school and youth group
- 3 **Monday** CE Staff meeting 5:45-6:45 in the Upper Elementary Room
- 9 Normal church school and youth group
- 16 Pageant Preparation for all children and youth with speaking parts during church school hour.
- 23 Christmas Pageant dress rehearsal during church school hour (it may run a little long)
- 24 Christmas Eve Family Service with Pageant 6:00 P.M., Candlelight service 8:00 P.M.
- 30 No CE or Youth Group

January

- 6 Bowl glazing for Souper Bowl of Caring; after Church School hour for upper elementary children and youth.



The Giving Tree Advent Project

Our church is providing gifts for four refugee families this year. There are nine adults and nine children. Gifts include items such as coats, boots, clothes, bedding, towels, hygiene and cleaning products. Please consider participating by:

- ★ Choosing gift tags from the Giving Tree in Fellowship Hall
- ★ Signing the color-coded master list on the table next to the tree indicating which person and gift you are purchasing
- ★ Bringing the UNWRAPPED gifts back by December 9th
- ★ Attaching the TAG securely to the gift
- ★ Putting the RECEIPT (not a gift receipt) in the envelope on the table

In addition, there will be baskets for hygiene items and cleaning supplies. Please purchase large family-sized items such as shampoo, deodorant, body wash, bar soap and feminine products. The cleaning supplies can be both bath and kitchen. Laundry soap and laundry supplies would also be appreciated. This year there will also be tags for Meijer gift cards and cash donations. These could provide a Christmas dinner for each family and miscellaneous items that the families need. Some of these items are blankets, first aid kits and flashlights and batteries.

Please plan to stay after church on December 9th for light refreshments provided by Parish Life Committee. We could also use help that morning to sort all the gifts and get them ready for pickup on December 10th.

Thank you for participating in our church

Save the Date! Chili & Game Night Sunday, January 13, 2019 5:00 P.M.

Join our church family for a delicious Chili Potluck & games. We will enjoy a variety of chili dishes at 5:00 with games beginning around 6:00. What better way to spend a chilly winter evening! More details will follow. Contact Deb Major at parishlife@okemospres.org with questions.



On Sunday, December 23, 2018 PCO will be participating in a special offering for the Presbyterian Church USA. The **Christmas Joy Offering** helps support two different mission efforts. Supporting the **Board of Pensions** provides current and retired church workers and their families in need with financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances. The second mission effort is to support **Presbyterian-related schools and colleges** who have a history of providing educational opportunities for communities of color. The Menaul School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, Tennessee, and Spillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama are recipients of this financial support.

Thanks very much for considering a generous donation for these worthy efforts.

The Grapevine is a monthly newsletter of

The Presbyterian Church of Okemos

Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.

STAFF

Rev. Dr. Robert T. Carlson, Jr., PASTOR

Rev. Alice Fleming Townley, Assistant Pastor

Sue Schnackenberg,

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES

Laurie Horstman, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday - Thursday: 9:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M.

Friday: 9:00 A.M.-Noon

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Mission Committee Public Policy Report,

November 2018

By Ellen Hoekstra

Several notable legal battles regarding immigration policies are underway at the federal level. The Ninth Circuit Court has ruled that former president Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was a legitimate exercise of executive discretion. In other words, it was upheld as being within presidential authority that did not require congressional action. More recently, President Trump's proclamation denying access to asylum to immigrants who arrive in the US illegally has been enjoined for one month, though there is not yet a definitive ruling on whether this proclamation was consistent with federal law.

In some post-election analysis of the results in Michigan, some analysts have noted that most (not all) counties that saw growth in Democratic participation within primaries also saw an increase in Democratic numbers in the General Election when compared to the 2014 General Election. Before the election, pundits had expected that the prohibition against straight party voting in 2018 would substantially reduce votes for candidates below the top of the ticket. Statewide, that was not the case, as evidenced by number of votes cast for the "down ballot" races for the various education boards—with candidates far less well-known than those running for congress or for governor. The State Board of Education, which went from an even split of Republicans and Democrats to a Democratic majority of six to two, has before it the significant task of selecting a new State Superintendent of Public Instruction, formerly held by Brian Whiston, who passed away last year.

At the state level, both chambers retained their Republican majorities. In each, Democrats picked up five seats, leaving the final numbers at 58-52 in the State House and 22-16 in the Senate. The change in the Senate was significant because it means that the majority party no longer can—on its own—override a gubernatorial veto or cause a bill that has been passed to take immediate effect. Added to those two changes is the fact that the Lieutenant Governor-elect Garlin Gilchrist, in his role as President of the Senae, can break a tie vote should that occur on his watch, and has procedural influence. You have heard it here first: the Lieutenant Governor-elect can be expected to have an excellent attendance record in his role presiding over the Senate!

Similar to what took place at the national level, the proportion of women legislators increased in Michigan. Starting in January, women will hold 36% rather than 25% of seats.

Both chambers met after the elections to choose their new leadership. The incoming Speaker of the House will be Representative Lee Chatfield (R-Levering), and the House's minority leader will be Representative Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills). The new Senate Majority Leader will be Senator Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake). The only leader who carries over from the current session is Senate Minority leader Jim Ananich (D-Flint).

The state legislature is now in recess until the week after Thanksgiving. Right now, both chambers are scheduled to meet the last week of Thanksgiving through the third week in December. If it is like most lame duck sessions, we can expect a great many bills to pass during these final weeks.



Daily Devotionals for Advent

Consider picking one up for yourself, and another to share.

New for 2018:

Draw Near includes daily scriptures, reflections, prayers, and art to color. Weekly themes include drawing near to wonder, to truth, to justice, to one another, and to love. Produced by Sanctified Art, a collective of young creative ministers who first met at Columbia Theological Seminary. They also produced the patterns for the new cut lace banners in our sanctuary that Artists Circle made. Suggested book donation: \$5.

Timeless Advent resources we have had before are also available:

Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas by Rev. Jan Richardson. This beautiful glossy book is full of scripture, reflections, original poetry and art. Weekly themes include darkness, desire, preparing a space, hope, birthing, welcoming and thresholds. Jan Richardson is a United Methodist minister, poet, and artist. She is also offering an online devotional, *Illuminated 2018: An Online Journey into the Heart of Christmas*, registration available at <https://janrichardson.com/adventretreat>. Suggested book donation: \$10

Celebrating Abundance: Devotions for Advent, by Walter Brueggemann. Includes scriptures and reflections helping us to see in the poverty and powerlessness of the stories, the wonder of God's abundant life and grace coming down to dwell among us. Brueggemann is a beloved and prophetic Old Testament professor, retired from Columbia Theological Seminary. Suggested donation: \$10.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

ADULT ED, SUNDAY MORNINGS

AT 11:30 A.M.

Rev. Carlson will be leading Bible Study on birth narratives in Luke's Gospel throughout December in Room 108.

December 2: Luke 1:39-80

December 9: Luke 2:1-7, Family Tree of Jesus

December 16: Luke 2:8-38

December 23: Luke and Matthew, compare and contrast

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION & FELLOWSHIP

Writing Life Stories group will meet Sunday, December 2, at 12:30 A.M. in Room 108.

Women's Supper Out

No December gathering. We will meet next on Monday, January 21.

Book Discussion Group meets Sunday, December 16, 12:30 P.M. in Room 108. We will discuss Wendell Berry's book, *FIDELITY, FIVE STORIES* (see Book Nook, page 7).

Retirees Group will meet again in January.

Women's Connection will meet next on Sunday, *January 27, 2019*. In the meantime, PCO women are encouraged to participate in the coming holiday worship and mission events. Holiday blessings to all!

MID-WEEK STUDY GROUPS AND CLASSES

Men's Group meets each Tuesday morning at 6:45 A.M. in Fellowship Hall.

Artists' Circle meets Tuesdays, 1:00 P.M., in Room 108. Come join our delightful group as we explore the ideas and concepts of Art and Christianity.

Conversation & Contemplation, with Rev. Alice Townley Wednesdays, at 10:00 A.M. in Room 108.

Bible Study: Thursdays, 9:30 A.M. in Room 108; with Ewen & Zora Todd

Thursday Morning Bible Study 9:30-10:30 A.M.

After examining the last three prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible this summer and fall, we will be studying the Gospel according to Matthew, the first book in the New Testament in December and the spring. We will introduce each chapter with a video of the words played out with actors and biblical settings, we will then discuss the verses in detail including exploring the Old Testament references Matthew uses.

Matthew is the most Jewish of the Gospels. It contains well-known passages such as the Magi in the Christmas story, the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, the Golden Rule, and phrases like "wolf in sheep's clothing." The Jews were the first to hear the gospel message, but many rejected it. The Jews have priority over the gentiles but the final instruction at Jesus' Ascension is that the disciples (and by inference all of us) are to go and make disciples of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Trinity).

Matthew is prominent in seeing Jesus as fulfilling Scripture (five OT passages relating to his birth and childhood, and others at his Passion). He sees Jesus as reinterpreting the Torah to show how his disciples should live as Christians, e.g., Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is prophet, priest, and king but greater than any of these in the past. Matthew is less secretive than Mark about the coming Kingdom. The disciples understand more of the parables than in Mark, but Jesus does berate them for their lack of faith. Peter is seen in a more negative light than in Mark. All believers are brothers, and Jesus has a special place in his heart for the little ones (marginalized and powerless). In chapters 16 and 18, Matthew uses ecclesia to indicate that the church already exists. Matthew demands we bring new members in from all over the earth, but he states that those who fall away will be excluded from the Kingdom. Matthew stresses that we all have to obey Christ's commandments demonstrated by good works ("doing the will of God") compared with John's focus on eternal life and Luke's on salvation.

The setting of the Gospel follows the final rupture between Christians with those of the Jewish faith, and hence the pointed exchanges in the Gospel between Christ and the religious leaders. The Gospel could be written for those in Jerusalem, but it is more likely for Christians struggling with their Jewish neighbors in Antioch which had a large Jewish population, and this is also where the followers of the Way were first called Christians. If Matthew/Levi was a tax collector, he could have written at least some of the Gospel as he would have better grasp of numbers and language than the other disciples. Some scholars put the Gospel written in 58-69 AD, partly based on persecutions of Christians by Sadducees in Jerusalem and in Rome around that time. Matthew ends with the Great Commission to evangelize all peoples, and a terrible fate awaits those who reject the Gospel message.

The book has three main sections: Jesus' origin and preparation for his ministry (chapters 1-4); development of Jesus' ministry with preaching and healing, beginning opposition and then polarization (chapters 5-16); the final steps with foretelling of his death and resurrection, the road to Jerusalem, passion, and resurrection, and final commission to all believers (chapters 17-28).

If you haven't been to a Bible study before, this is a good book to start from.

Ewen Todd

Wintertime – is here!

As you all know valet parking provides a valuable ministry to members & guests who would like to benefit of hospitality offered by valet parking service. We need your help with this great service to our members to assure them that we want them at church and offer them help to be there!

You can now signup online (see below for guidelines) or directly email me your week preference.

Also, below you will find key directions for a valet parking attendant.

How to signup online?

Online signup is now open (December - March). To sign up online:

- Please go to http://okemospres.org/signup/?sheet_id=15
- It will take you directly to the valet parking signup page, where you can select and signup
- When you are done signing up you should receive two email reminders, first email one week before and second email two days before your selected date.

Key guidelines:

- Plan to arrive at church **shortly after 9:30 AM** to place the Valet Parking signs out by the road and by the circle drive. Signs are located in the room to the right off the vestibule to fellowship hall where the tables are stored.



- There also is a sign to reserve some parking spots closer to the building which you should place on the east edge of the parking lot nearest the circle drive to reserve parking spots for valet parking..can put out if you desire.
- Be available to come out the front covered entrance when you see a car pull up.
- Greet the visitor and help them into the building, telling them you will return their keys once car is parked and ask where they will be?
- After parking the car, return the keys and ask if they will need help after the service.
- There are "Valet Parking" ID's on the name board to use if you wish to identify yourself.
- Please feel free to enter the service at 10:00 when it starts.
- PLEASE collect the signs when done and return to closet
- If you need a substitute either call or email to let coordinator know so he/she can arrange one.

We appreciate your help!

Please feel free to contact either of us if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Sumeer Qurashi (517-599-8139),
(drsumeer@yahoo.co.in)

Brett Cone (brett.cone@us.schindler.com)

Happy 200th Anniversary

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the beloved Christmas carol "Silent Night". For centuries this simple lullaby to the Christ child has crossed both borders and barriers to become a song for world peace. Each year it is sung by an estimated two billion people across the globe, on all continents, and in over 300 languages and dialects.

"Silent Night" was first performed in 1818 at St. Nicholas parish church in Oberndorf near Salzburg, Austria. A young priest, Father Joseph Mohr, had written the lyrics in 1816. The music was composed by Franz Gruber, a schoolmaster and organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf. Mohr brought the words to Gruber, and asked him to write a melody with guitar accompaniment for Christmas Eve.

There are many legends and stories associated with that first performance. The story about the defective organ has been told for decades. Some have even blamed a voracious mouse for nibbling on the organ bellows! Historical records do indicate that the church organ was in dire need of repairs, but was playable. However, documents also suggest that Mohr and Gruber planned to sing "Silent Night" after Christmas Eve Mass outside in front of the Nativity Scene which would explain the use of the guitar accompaniment.

Regardless of the historical details, "Silent Night" remains a timeless lullaby to the Christ child, a lullaby for us all.

Marlene



Wendell Berry is a poet, novelist, and essayist, better yet, a steward of words and of the environment. A native of Kentucky, he has lived and farmed 75-125 acres in Henry County for five decades. He has consistently criticized much of the modern world. Like William Faulkner, he has also created an alternative vision—a fictional community of faith-filled, flawed characters living and moving and having their being around Port William, Kentucky. In *FIDELITY*, published in 1992, Berry continues the story told in *HANNAH COULTER, A WORLD LOST, THE MEMORY OF OLD JACK, REMEMBERING, A PLACE ON EARTH*, and other works of fiction.

It is the life of small farmers, homemakers, loyal kin, people who work the land, know their roots, and speak their mind. It is the life of common sense, community, compassion, and reverence for the land. Greed, murder, disappointment, and “the larger, looser, darker order” of love also appear. So do Biblical passages such as “Pray without ceasing.” As the title to this collection of five stories suggests, it is a way of life worth telling. “In grief and responsibility,” people such as Burley Coulter acquire “griefs and losses, guilts and sorrows.” In Hannah Coulter’s “truest self, that stream always astir inside her . . . was at once pity and love, knowledge and faith, forgiveness, grief, and joy.”

One story lasts less than half a day. Another is a story (a killing in 1912) within a story (told in 1965) within a story (memories in 1990).

In “Making It Home,” Arthur Rowanberry, a World War II soldier, is returning from service overseas, where he saw many of his friends killed and where “nothing was whole.” Now he is feeling “the expectations of other people fall away from him like a shed skin,” and he is coming “into himself.” Reconciling himself to the land and the work of the land, he returns to a homecoming filled with awe and love and fear. “Tell your granny to set another plate,” his father says to Art’s young nephew, “for we have our own that was and has come again.” From the destruction of war and a two-day journey of transformation to a variation on the Biblical parable of the prodigal son, the story moves simply but steadily.

In “Are You All Right?” Art Rowanberry and his brother, Martin, are the recipients of someone else’s care and concern. Growing old, “under the sign of mortality,” practicing “an old-fashioned independence . . . generosity . . . and fidelity to their word and their friends,” they have been unheard from since the river flooded four days earlier. So Elton Penn and Andy Catlett seek out their friends. “Are you aaalll right?” “Yeeeeeaaah!” The trust and “sympathy of the body and mind” that Mart and Elton had known over a lifetime are restored.

In “A Jonquil for Mary Penn,” Elton Penn gets up early, does the chores, eats breakfast, and leaves,

intending to help a neighbor with the spring plowing. Mary does not tell her husband that she is not feeling well. After doing some errands, she returns to bed, remembering the life and love and loyalty and assent that the couple have given to each other. Their youth has turned into mature understanding, their poverty into genuine economy of spirit, and her parents’ rejection of Elton into the warmth and support of a rural community. When she awakens, she sees Josie Tom, her neighbor, in a rocker near the bed, sewing an Easter lily onto her unfinished embroidery. “So he had known. He had thought of her. He had told Josie Tom.” Many of Berry’s stories end on such notes of quiet strength, devotion, and harmony.

The longest stories in this collection, “Pray without Ceasing” and “Fidelity,” are more complicated and absorbing. In the former, Thad Coulter, under the influence of failure, drunk, and feeling betrayed, angry, and joyful all mixed up, kills his best friend, Ben Feltner. To right such “bottomless sorrow” that he has caused, Coulter kills himself. Seventy-eight years later, Andy Catlett, recalling the story from his grandmother’s side, realizes that the grief has worn itself out, that his own father, Wheeler, has brought the Coulter and Feltner families back together, and that Andy is a child of his grandfather Mat’s forgiveness. Two lessons emerge from this story. “If God loves the ones we can’t,” Andy’s grandmother says, “then finally maybe we can.” The second lesson is the mystery of time and eternity, the “transformation in which the living, by dying, pass into the living,” a lesson learned in grief and love and wonder.

The title story is my favorite in this book. It is filled with outer humor and inner seriousness. In “Fidelity,” Danny Branch puts his sick father, 82-year-old Burley Coulter, in a hospital, then realizes his mistake. In the middle of the night, he “kidnaps” his father and takes him to the woods to give him a more dignified and fitting death, one free of all the tubes and tests and poking and prodding and bureaucracy of the “best of modern medical care.” In the hollow where he belongs, Burley Coulter, “by calling and by devotion a man of the woods and streams,” dies. Family members and friends, who believe that “people belong to each other and to God,” successfully thwart the efforts of the police to solve this “crime.” And in his attorney’s office, Wheeler Catlett gives an impromptu but eloquent eulogy of his friend, Burley Coulter: “He took care of his mother until she died. He was a good and loyal partner to his brother. He was a true friend to all his friends. He knew himself and he told the truth. . . . He looked at the world and found it good. . . . He learned what he had to, and he changed, and so he made himself exceptional. He was, I will say, a faithful man.”

FIDELITY is filled with such faithful men and women.

Review by Ron Dorr





THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS
2258 BENNETT RD
OKEMOS, MI 48864-3233

Advent and Christmas Worship

First Sunday of Advent, December 2

Sunday Morning Worship, 10:00 A.M., Communion
"A People Prepared for the Lord"
Alternative Christmas Market 11:30 A.M.

Second Sunday of Advent, December 9

Sunday morning Worship, 10:00 A.M.
Giving Tree Gift Delivery, 11:30 A.M.

Third Sunday of Advent, December 16

Sunday Morning Worship, 10:00 A.M.
"Message in a Bottle"
Christmas Caroling, 11:30 A.M.

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 23

Sunday Morning Worship, 10:00 A.M.
"Peace on Earth"

Christmas Eve Worship and Pageant, December 24, 6:00 P.M.

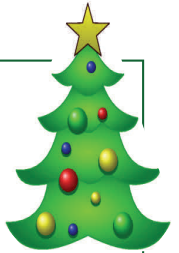
This is a family-friendly worship service that features Christmas Carols and a telling of the Christmas story through a pageant where all children who desire may participate.

Candlelight & Communion Christmas Eve Worship, December 24, 8:00 P.M..

This is a traditional Christmas Eve worship service that tells the Christmas story through lessons, carols and candlelight. We observe the Sacrament of Communion.

Christmas Dinner

Are you looking for a place to enjoy Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day? Parish Life will once again have our Christmas Potluck Dinner at church on December 25th at 1:00 P.M. If you would like to help organize this dinner, prepare the main dish, or attend please contact Deb Major at parishlife@okemospres.org.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1 style="color: green;">December 2018</h1> <h2 style="color: green;">Activities and Events of The Presbyterian Church of Okemos</h2>						1
						7:00pm <i>Lessons Carols</i>
2 1st Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship & Communion Alternative Christmas Market 12:30pm Life Stories 12:30pm Youth Group	3 5:45pm CE Staff meeting 6pm Jubellees rehearsal 6:45pm Monday Mallets rehearsal	4 6:45am Men's Group 1:00pm Artists' Circle 5:45pm Worship & Music committee meeting	5 10am Conversation & Contemplation 7pm Parish Life Committee meeting 7:30pm Personnel Committee	6 9:30am Bible Study 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	7 1pm Prayer Shawl group	8
9 2nd Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship 11:30am CE Hour Giving Tree gift delivery 12:30pm Youth Group	10 6pm Jubellees rehearsal 6:45pm Monday Mallets rehearsal	11 6:45am Men's Group 1:00pm Artists' Circle	12 10am Conversation & Contemplation 6:30pm Administration Committee 6:30pm Mission Committee 7pm Communication & Engagement	13 9:30am Bible Study 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	14 	15
16 3rd Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship 11:00am December Birthdays 11:30am Pageant prep 11:30am CE Hour 11:30pm Caroling	17 6pm Jubellees rehearsal 6:45pm Monday Mallets rehearsal	18 6:45am Men's Group 1:00pm Artists' Circle	19 10am Conversation & Contemplation 7:30pm Meeting of Session	20 9:30am Bible Study 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	21 Grapevine deadline 1pm Prayer shawl group	22
23 4th Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship Christmas Joy Offering 11:30am CE Hour 11:30am Pageant dress rehearsal	24 Christmas Eve 6:00pm Family Worship with Pageant Wassail & Cookies 8:00pm Candlelight & Communion Worship	25 Christmas Day 6:45am Men's Group  1pm Christmas Dinner at PCO	26	27	28	29
30 10:00am Worship No CE classes 1:00pm Eagle Scout ceremony	31 New Year's Eve					

**SAVE-THE-DATE for the 13th & Final
Foundation Fighting Blindness “Fun” Raiser!
Yes, it is true. This is our last big event.**

When: Saturday, January 26, 2019

Where: The Presbyterian Church of Okemos

Why: To support research, treatments, & cures for blinding retinal eye diseases

What to do: Bring your crafts: scrapbooking, card-making, knitting, crocheting, or come to read, finish that project, or chat with friends new & old. Join us for a day of food, fun, and friendship to support the FFB. As always, there will be raffles, make & takes, and yummy food & drinks to enjoy all day. Sign up NOW! Contact Sandy Detrisac at church, or email at detrisacsd@comcast.net or by phone 349-0324. Thanks so much for your past support! We are hoping to break a few records - don't miss the fun.

Christmas Poinsettias: A sign-up sheet is posted in Fellowship Hall. Poinsettias can be purchased to decorate our sanctuary for Christmas. There are many choices of color and size. You can take them home after the Christmas Eve services. Please make checks payable to Sally Belloli. Thank you.