

Beulah and Monterey

eNewsletter
December, 2023



PRAYER LIST - *Please note, we use the name only to respect privacy and confidentiality.*

Marlene Reynolds, Joanne Jennings, Myra Lowry, Amy Vaus, Ruby Swecker, Cary Johnston, Lillian Dever, Lynne Bier, Sandie Stinnett, Bill and Mary Lou Cox, Andrea Lewis and others you carry in your heart and in your prayers.

BIRTHDAYS

- 12/10 – Ava Frayer
- 12/16 – Marlene Reynolds
- 12/18 – Laura Warner

ANNIVERSARIES

- 12/20 - Karen and Tim Allen
- 12/24 - Patsy and Dale Simmons

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

12/10 – **Joint worship** service at **10:30**, hosted by Beulah. Youth from both churches will be leading worship and they have worked hard to provide a meaningful service for the second week in Advent.

Community choir will perform the afternoon of the 10th at the Highland Center. Members from both Beulah and Monterey will be taking part in the service, including the Glory Bells, directed by Richard Simmons.

12/13 - 7:00 pm **session meeting** – Monterey Presbyterian.

12/16 - Joint **mission project** with McDowell Presbyterian to make Cookie Plates. Cookies or other treats should be homemade and if you can't make it to McDowell, leave them on the kitchen counter at Monterey PC any time on Friday, 12/15. Don't want to bake? We will also need folks to help assemble plates and make deliveries. Brit Chambers is coordinating the effort from Monterey Presbyterian and you can reach her at britchambers@gmail.com if you have questions. See flyer on page 2 for more info.

12/17 – Pastor Adam White will be leading worship at both churches. The service to welcome new members at MPC has been postponed until January. More information to come.

12/24 – **Christmas Eve Worship services**

- Will Cox will be leading worship at **Beulah** at 9:30
- Members of **MPC** will be providing music, reading scripture and telling stories during a special worship service that starts at 11:15. Communion will also be served
- Annual live nativity at Laurel Point begins at 10:00 pm.

12/31 – End the year on a high note, or a low note if that's where your voice lives, at our **5th Sunday Hymn Sing**, hosted by MPC. If you don't feel like singing, come and listen to the joyful noise. The worship Service will be followed by brunch. Monterey will provide bacon, sausage and scrambled eggs, as well as additional toppings to make breakfast burritos. The Monterey congregation is asked to bring a brunch dish. Guests from Beulah and McDowell Presbyterian just need to stay and join the fellowship of a good meal. Bring a friend, all are welcome!



**Cookie Plates
Dec. 16
10 am**



Bring homemade cookies, candies and other treats to make cookie plates to deliver to folks needing some Christmas cheer. We'll sing carols as we deliver them to people in McDowell, then split up to deliver throughout the county. Can't come Saturday? Drop off treats in the church kitchen on Friday.

The **Highland Food Pantry** is in need of paper products. We will be collecting toilet paper, paper towels and tissues for the remainder of 2023.

ADVENT

If you looked at only retail stores you would think Christmas was the day after Halloween. We spend weeks preparing decorations, buying or making gifts, adding events to our calendar and giving ourselves the opportunity to eat treats. In the middle of all the planning we add Thanksgiving festivities and by the time Christmas day arrives, we are either happy it all worked out, or we are stressed by what didn't go as planned.

As Christians, we enjoy all the things mentioned above, but may add the enjoyment of singing or listening to carols and hymns, special worship services and perhaps assembling a creche in our home. But even Christians don't always spend much time during Advent preparing ourselves for the birth of Christ, when God came to live among. If any of this sounds familiar, then maybe we need a reminder of how the season of Advent can be important to our faith journey.



Advent means "coming" and is a liturgical season where we can celebrate:

Christ has come into our world.

Christ is coming into our lives.

Christ will come again to fulfill our hope for a new world of peace and love.

Early Christians started celebrating Advent around 300 AD as a time of fasting and asking God for forgiveness of their sins. It became a tradition first in the Catholic church. By the 1830's, the Lutheran Church started using a wreath with candles during the season of Advent. Today, all Christian denominations recognize Advent, although traditions can differ or not be practiced at all.

Over time the following themes have become traditional and can give us focus for each week before Christmas. Today we often use themes and colors when lighting the Advent candles during worship.

- ❖ Week 1 – **Hope**, usually purple
- ❖ Week 2 – **Peace**, usually purple
- ❖ Week 3 – **Joy**, usually pink or purple
- ❖ Week 4 – **Love**, usually purple
- ❖ Christmas Eve or Christmas Day service, white

As Christians, we know that Christmas is about Jesus, but when I look at the days between now and December 25, how much time am I devoting to preparing for the birth by welcoming Jesus into my heart compared to the time I will spend on opening presents or preparing a special meal on December 25? In a chaotic, violent, and stressful world, what am I doing to help or how am I showing love? Despite grief, illness, and sadness during Advent, what can I do to find moments of hope, peace or joy? How can I help others feel the same?

Everlasting God,

You came to live among us as a baby born into a chaotic world. You were present then, and you are present now, if we will only open ourselves to your love. Thank you for the gift of Advent, a season of preparation for the gift of a Messiah, and help us create those moments of hope, peace, joy and love that we so desperately need.

Amen

NOVEMBER HAPPENINGS



On November 19 we had a great worship service at MPC, followed by a soup and salad lunch, 2 mission projects and youth play practice for their service on 12/10. Here are a few photos of lunch, as well as assembling holiday bags for MOWs participants through VPAS, and Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes to go to Africa. What a great day!



Samantha Meyerhoeffer was baptized in Brookville, Ohio on Sunday, November 18. Her family here in Highland, Amy and David Frayer, as well as her sisters, Hannah Meyerhoeffer and Ava Frayer, were able to be present at this big event in Sammy's life.





What a grand Thanksgiving for Bill and Mary Lou Cox when they were able to share the day with their children and grandchildren, 30 folks in all.

This picture captures Bill and Mary Lou surrounded by their grandchildren.

L to R: Evan Cox, Aidan Cox, Susanna Hadfield, Birdie Hadfield, Charlotte Hadfield, Olivia Cox, Willa Hadfield, Mary Lou "Binky" Cox, Emily Cox, Zoe Bendel, Rhea Bendel, Bill Cox, Tessa Bendel, Wren Cox, Jaden Cox, Cullen Bendel

If you ever had the opportunity to sit in one of the pulpit chairs at Monterey Presbyterian, you often held your breath that you wouldn't fall through the seat or be attacked by a cushion spring. What a blessing that the family of Garland Dever provided the funding to have the pulpit chairs completely restored and they are not only beautiful, but comfortable.

Garland Dever was a man of faith who loved his church, and over many years served as an elder, church treasurer, and choir member. He joyfully served the church and his community, and the restoration of the pulpit chairs are a lasting memorial to a fine man.

A special thank you also goes to Mark Swecker, who took the old chairs to Staunton for refurbishing, then brought the restored chairs back to their home in MPC.



Other building and renovation projects continue at both churches. Beulah is continuing the rehab on their kitchen and has resourcefully moved the contents of the old kitchen to other spaces while keeping their Sunday School room intact.

Monterey has been expanding the pad where the grill sits, making room for a picnic table and additional seating around the edge of the wall.

As a reminder, the pavilion is available for use at no charge. One only needs to let the church know so the date can be reserved on their calendar.

JOY GIFT OFFERING

During Advent we will collect the Christmas Joy Gift offering, in addition to our regular offering. 50% of your gifts make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The other 50% provides assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.