

The Good News Gazette

The First Presbyterian Church
94-96 Main Street Chester, NY 10918
December 2016

An Advent/Christmas Reflection

So often we get caught up in the busy-ness of the season we don't always slow down or take much time for reflection. In doing so, we sometimes miss things. Things that have always been there. Things we might have heard before. Things we don't always connect to this season and the birth of our Savior. So I invite you to take a few moments to quiet your heart and reflect on this beautiful, and somewhat jolting, poem by Ann Weems called, "The Refugees" (For a deeper reflection, read with Matthew 1:18-2:18).

Into the wild and painful cold of the starless winter night came the refugees,
slowly making their way to the border.
The man, stooped from age or anxiety, hurried his small family through the wind.
Bearded and dark, his skin rough and cracked from the cold,
his frame looming large in spite of the slumped shoulders:
He looked like a man who could take care of whatever came at them from the dark.
Unless, of course, there were too many of them. One man he could handle . . . two, even . . . but a
border patrol . . . they wouldn't have a chance.
His eyes, black and alert, darted from side to side, then over his shoulder, then back again forward.
Had they been seen? Had they been heard?
Every rustle of wind, every sigh from the child, sent terror through his chest.
Was this the way? Even the stars had been unkind---
Had hidden themselves in the ink of night so that the man could not read their way.
Only the wind . . . was it enough?
Only the wind and his innate sense of direction . . .
What kind of cruel judgment would that be, to wander in circles through the night?
Or to safely make their way to the border only to find the authorities waiting for them?
He glanced at the young woman, his bride. No more than a child herself.
She nuzzled their newborn, kissing his neck. She looked up, caught his eye, and smiled.
Oh, how the homelessness had taken its toll on her!
Her eyes were red, her young face lined,
her lovely hair matted from inattention,
her clothes stained from milk and baby,
her hands chapped from the raw wind of winter.
She'd hardly had time to recover from childbirth when word had come that they were hunted, and
they fled with only a little bread, the remaining wine.
Suddenly, the child began to make small noises.
The man drew his breath in sharply.
The woman quietly put the child to breast.
Fear . . . long dread-filled moments . . .
Huddled, the family stood still in the long silence.
At last the man breathed deeply again reassured they had not been heard.
And into the night continued Mary and Joseph and the Babe.
(Kneeling in Bethlehem, p. 63-64)

Bible Study

Bible Study is back. We will be holding an Advent Bible Study downtown at 19 Main Street Thursdays at 10am. The first one will start on the 1st and we will go through the 22nd. There will be no study on the 29th, but we hope to pick back up again on the 5th. Hope you can join us!

Advent Lunch Bag Devotionals

We will be holding Advent Lunch Bag Devotionals for the four weeks of Advent. The first one will begin on Nov. 30th at 12pm in the choir practice room and we will share a lunch together afterwards. We will have one each of the following Wednesdays at 12pm our last one will be Dec. 21st. We look forward to having you join us for a time to slow down during such a busy season and focus on our wonderful Savior.

Looking Ahead

December 1 – Bible Study 10am

December 4 – Communion Sunday

December 6 – Presbytery Meeting at Freedom Plains 9:30am

December 7 – Advent Lunch Bag Devotionals 12pm

December 8 – Bible Study 10am

December 10 – Morning Star combined choir Christmas Cantata 4:30pm

December 11 – Bell Choir Practice 9am

Session meeting following worship

Deacons meeting following worship

December 12 – Food Pantry Truck delivery – tentative

December 13 – Women’s Council 1pm

December 14 – Advent Lunch Bag Devotionals 12pm

Buildings and Grounds meeting 4pm

December 15 – Bible Study 10am

Food Pantry Distribution

December 18 – Bell Choir Practice 9:15am

December 21– Advent Lunch Bag Devotionals 12pm

Longest Night Service 7pm

December 22 – Bible Study 10am

December 24 – Christmas Eve Carol and Candlelight Service 7pm

December 25 – Christmas Day service 10am

Pastor Erin will be off on vacation from Dec 26-27. Please contact the church office or a session member if there is an emergency.

If you have an article or announcement you would like to have in the next newsletter, please have it into the church office by December 20th.

Pastor: Erin Moore

Moderator of Deacons: Okey Barrett (845) 651-4707

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If you are in need of pastoral care, please contact our pastor at the church office number (845-469-4877).

