

The Good News Gazette

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

December 2017

“We know the scene: the room, variously furnished,
almost always a lectern, a book; always
the tall lily.

Arrived on solemn grandeur of great wings,
the angelic ambassador, standing or hovering,
whom she acknowledges, a guest.

But we are told of meek obedience. No one mentions
courage.

The engendering Spirit
did not enter her without consent.

God waited.

She was free
to accept or to refuse, choice
integral to humanness.

Aren't there annunciations
of one sort or another
in most lives?

Some unwillingly
undertake great destinies,
enact them in sullen pride,
uncomprehending.

More often
those moments

when roads of light and storm
open from darkness in a man or woman,
are turned away from

in dread, in a wave of weakness, in despair
and with relief.

Ordinary lives continue.

God does not smite them.

But the gates close, the pathway vanishes.”

Part of Denise Levertov's poem "Annunciation" first published in "A Door in the Hive."

Advent is a time we anticipate Christ's coming. Advent means arrival, a notable arrival of a person, thing, or event. We await Christ's arrival, knowing he already arrived, came into our world once and will one day come again. Luke 1:26-56 depicts the announcement of the coming of Christ with the birth of Jesus foretold and the annunciation, Mary's song. This annunciation is what Denise Levertov reflects on in her poem above. While only a piece of this poem is shared, it certainly helps us to reflect on this season of Advent and what it means to welcome Christ. Some 2,000 years ago, a young woman had a choice to make. She could have said no; God would have found someone else. Each day we have a choice to make, we can say yes or no. Allowing God to use us or leaving God to look for someone else. This season of Advent, may we reflect on

the choice that Mary made. What it meant for her to say yes and all the difficulties that yes brought. Saying yes to God doesn't make life any easier. In fact, at times it might make it harder. But in the end, I doubt Mary would have changed her mind. As Levertov expresses above, we all have moments like this in our lives. Choices that we can welcome Christ in our lives, welcome God in us. Will we choose to let God in or will we turn away? This advent let us reflect on what it means that Christ has come, welcomed by Mary as a way to enter this world, and what it would mean if we as well answered yes in welcoming Christ into this world. May we all say with Mary, here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word (Luke 1:38), welcoming Christ into our hearts this Advent and Christmas season.

Pastor Erin

A Thank You from Women's Council

Women's Council says, "Consider yourself hugged and thanked so much for your response to our annual second offering for Church World Service!" Over \$800 was received in Blanket donations – we rejoice with you that so many will be comforted and warmed with a blanket especially those people affected by hurricanes this past fall. So we cannot Thank You!! enough for sharing with those in need. You certainly, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Thank you again!

Deacons Update

The Deacons have been busy this past year with Food Pantry and making sure gifts were ready for Mother's and Father's day. Cards were sent out from the Care and Share committee and before the end of the year they will be packing college boxes.

If you know someone in college out of this area, please contact Okey Barrett or any Deacon.

The Pantry crew has been busy on their own as well with translating forms and notices to Spanish. Jean is looking for proofreaders. As well as making sure all the volunteers and helpers are properly trained per new federal regulations.

Also, in an effort to publicize the local Pantry, a news article was submitted to the Chronicle.

Stewardship Pledge

On November 26th we collected our stewardship pledges. If you haven't gotten your pledge in yet, please get it in ASAP. Session needs to know our projected pledges to help determine the 2018 budget.

December Second Offering

Our second offering for December 17th will be for PCUSA Christmas Joy. More information about PCUSA Christmas Joy offering will be in the bulletins leading up to the collection.

Holiday Shopping – Shop Rite Cards

Just a reminder to pick up your Shop Rite gift cards from the church for the holidays. You can order in increments of \$25, \$50, or \$100. They make perfect gifts for family, friends, co-workers. Also, with all the extra holiday food shopping you are doing make sure to pick an extra one up for yourself!

Book Club

Pastor Erin would like to know if anyone would be interested in a book club (possibly an evening) starting in January. For more information and to sign up, **please see the bulletin board.**

Looking Ahead

- December 3 – Deacons meeting following worship**
- December 4 – Bible Study 10am (19 Main St)**
 - Music and Worship meeting 1pm**
- December 5 – Presbytery meeting at 9:30am at Stony Point**
- December 6 – Advent Lunch Bag Devotionals 12pm**
 - Waiting for Hope – Creative Advent Service 7pm**
- December 10 – Session meeting following worship**
 - 4:30pm Holiday Parade (tentative 3:30pm set-up)**
- December 11– Bible Study 10 am (19 Main St)**
- December 13 –Advent Lunch Bag Devotionals 12pm**
 - Waiting for Hope – Creative Advent Service 7pm**
- December 18 - Food Pantry Truck (tentative)**
- December 19 – Women’s Council Meeting 1pm**
- December 20 –Advent Lunch Bag Devotionals 12pm**
 - Longest Night Service 7pm**
- December 21 – Food Pantry Distribution 4-7pm**
- December 24 – 10am Advent 4 Service**
 - 7pm Christmas Eve Family Candlelight Service**
- December 31 – 10am New Year’s Service/Hymn Sing**

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 18th. Pastor Erin will be on vacation Dec 26th-29th. If there is a pastoral emergency please contact a session member.

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