



Pennington Presbyterian



FAITH + COMMUNITY + SERVICE

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

Can you believe it? We are already half way through the season of Advent! What a special time it is for all of us.

For centuries, artists have helped us to celebrate Advent and Christmas in ways which amaze and delight. The variety of crèches, which will adorn our sanctuary window sills this month, is a testimony to the way the story of Jesus' birth has been embraced the world over. Some are simple and remind us of the poverty and simplicity of the young family. Others are ornate, creating in us wonder and awe for this God made flesh. I hope you will take time to enjoy these gifts of love made by God's children in many nations.

I love to read the Advent hymns and Christmas carols as poems. Their imagery is rich. Their theology is deep. You might be surprised how many of our favorite hymns celebrate not only the birth of Jesus, but also the salvation he brings. Well-crafted words paired with beautiful tunes become for us treasures more precious than gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Ann Weems is a wonderful poet, writer and liturgist. Her book, *Kneeling in Bethlehem*, is a collection of poems for people just like us, and for a time just like this. Here is one, a gift for you this day.

THE CHILD IS BORN AGAIN

*Each year the Child is born again.
Each year some new heart
finally hears
finally sees
finally knows love.
And in heaven
there is great rejoicing!
There is a festival of stars!
There is celebration among the angels!*

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OF SPECIAL INTEREST IN THIS EDITION:

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**Next issue: 12/21
Deadline Monday 12/19
9:00 AM**

Focus is issued the first and third Wednesdays of each month, except July & August. During those two summer months, only one Focus newsletter is published per month.



*For in the finding of one lost
sheep,
the heart of the Shepherd is
glad, and
Christmas has happened once
more.*

*The Child is born anew
and one more knee is bowed!*

I thank God for artists and their
holy gifts to us this season. Pray
that we might all know love.

In Christ,
Nancy
Nancy Mikoski



Upcoming ...

Dec. 18, 10:15 AM – Special music
by adult & children’s choirs

Dec. 18, 4 PM – Blue Christmas
Vespers

Dec. 24, 5 PM – Christmas Eve
Family Service

Dec. 24, 10 PM – Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service

Dec. 25, 10:15 AM – Christmas
Morning Service

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CALENDAR

REGULAR WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Sunday

9:00 AM— Church School for all ages
10:15 AM – Worship Service followed by
coffee hour

(Note: Cherub Choir for pre-k through
grade 1 meets during part of the worship
service)

7:00 PM—Jr./Sr. Highs

Wednesday

9:15 AM—Shalom Women’s Bible Study
4:30 PM—Genesis Choir (grades 2-5)
5:15 PM—Gloria Deo Choir (grades 6 and
up)

Thursday

7:00 PM—Bell Choir
8:00 PM—Adult Choir

LOOKING AHEAD...

Dec. 10 – Nursery School CCC
Dec. 10 – Progressive Dinner

Dec. 11 – Advent Craft & Caroling Event

Dec. 12 – Stephen Ministers
Dec. 12 – Mission Committee

Dec. 15 – Pres Plus Seniors Holiday
Party

Dec. 15 – HomeFront

Dec. 18 – Special Music during worship
Dec. 18 – Blue Christmas Vespers, 4 PM

Dec. 20 – Facilities Committee
Dec. 20 – C.E. Committee

Dec. 21 – Stewardship Committee

**Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Services
5 PM & 10 PM**

**Dec. 25 – Christmas Day Service
10:15 AM**



WORSHIP SCHEDULE Sundays

■ **Sunday, Dec. 11, 10:15 AM** – Sermon: Rev. Nancy Mikoski

■ **Sunday, Dec. 18, 10:15 AM** – Special Music Offering by the Adult & Children’s Choirs
“Sing Noel”

CHILDREN’S CHURCH SCHOOL Sunday 9 AM

■ **J.A.M.I. (“Jesus and Me!”; k-thru-5th grade)** meets in Lower Titus Hall to be
shepherded to weekly hands-on workshops. Through science, drama, music,
art, cooking, and more kids gain insight into recurring Bible stories and
themes. ■ **INFANTS THROUGH PRE-K** please see page 3 for room locations.

ADULT CHURCH SCHOOL Sunday 9 AM

■ **FORUM** (topics include current events, community concerns, theology, the
Bible and Mission) ■ **MAKING FAITH REAL** (group-led open discussion of faith
and Spirit in our daily lives). ■ **BIBLICAL LITERATURE AND FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH**
(two tracks – one focusing Biblical books, themes and questions and another
focusing on core beliefs and practices of the Christian faith)

See website for current offerings

Sunday School’s not just for kids!

KIDS, FAMILY, AND SEASONAL DOINGS

- **SR. HIGHS (9-12 GRADE) & JR. HIGHS (6-8 GRADE)**
SUNDAY, 7 – 8:30 P.M. (*unless stated otherwise*)
DEC. 11 – Sr. Highs will meet in the “pit”
DEC. 11 – Jr. Highs meet in Heritage Hall. Topic: “Worth the Wait”
DEC. 18 – Sr. Highs & Jr. Highs will go caroling

■ SUNDAY AM CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS:

Infants – 2yr. olds: Room 209
3 yr olds - Pre-School: Room 102
6th – 8th: Balcony classroom
Sr. Highs: The Pit
Interpreting the Bible: The Upper Room
Forum: Heritage Hall
Making Faith Real: Room 206

Rotations for K-5th grade: Start in Lower Titus Hall then rotate to different locations.

- **PRES PLUS SENIORS CHRISTMAS PARTY** The annual celebration will take place Thursday December 15 at Pennington Point Club House. Festivities will begin at 11:00 am. Come join in games, carol singing, and Christmas readings. A catered lunch will be enjoyed at a nominal cost. Enjoy fellowship and good cheer with your church friends!
- **MISSION COMMITTEE STAR TREE** We are again providing much-needed food this Christmas for the children and families served by the Children’s Day School in Ewing Township. Please take stars from our tree in Upper Titus Hall, purchase the food items listed on the stars, and return the items and stars to the tree by Sunday, December 18, at the latest. The need is especially great this year; we thank you for your generosity!! Questions? Call Hope Anderson at 320-3285.
- **ANGEL TREE** The Deacons are once again sponsoring the Angel Tree for underprivileged children from the Children’s Day School. Each angel has a toy and a clothing article listed. Angels are available after worship in Upper Titus Hall. Share an angel with a friend! Please remember to sign up for the angels that you choose. Wrapped gifts with the Angel tag should be returned to Upper Titus Hall no later than Sunday, December 11. If you have any questions, please call Karen Schmutz at 865-6693 or Karen Kelly at 737-9176.
- **PROGRESSIVE DINNER** PPC’s Annual Progressive Christmas dinner will be held Saturday, December 10. Everyone will gather at one home for hors d’oeuvres, then break away and go to various homes for dinner and dessert. We even had a vegetarian dinner last year, so don’t let special dietary requests hold you back from participating. We still need homes to host a dinner group! This is a wonderful way to begin the holiday season with your church family. For further information, or to volunteer to host, call Cindy Carothers at 737-2629, Carol Meyer at 730-9608 or Sarah Gregg at 737-3066.
- **POINSETTIAS** You may order poinsettias, \$10 each, in honor or in memory of loved ones. Forms are available outside the church office. Last chance! The deadline for ordering: Friday, Dec. 9.
- **RED KETTLE** You can be a part of the Salvation Army Christmas Tradition! Pennington Presbyterian Church will take a turn ringing the bell in support of the Salvation Army on Saturday December 10 at the Pennington Market, between 10:00 AM and 8:00 PM. We need a minimum of two volunteers for each two hour shift. Questions? Call Scott Reeder at 303-0602.
- **FAMILY ADVENT CRAFT AND CAROLING EVENT** Sunday, December 11, from 3:00-5:00pm we will gather in Heritage Hall for crafts and snacks. Then we’ll go Christmas caroling. Join us! Questions? Call Shannon Smythe at 240-2109.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

God of our past, present, and future, we give you all thanks and praise for nurturing congregations. We thank you for those who have supported and encouraged us and have served you so faithfully. Encourage and embolden us to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ wherever we are today. Amen.

-from PPC Mission Yearbook

Advent



OUR CHURCH FAMILY

- Please keep Harry Mulder and Kevin Swaim in your prayers.
- We extend our sympathy to Melita Johnson and family on the recent death of Melita’s son-in-law, Norman.
- From Dorothy & Charles Bryan: “Dear Church Family, Thank you sincerely for your prayers, caring, all the calls, cards, hugs, food & flowers you showered on the Bryan family. It is deeply appreciated.”
- The Blackwell & Wicoff family extend their heartfelt thanks for everyone’s expression of sympathy in their loss of Virginia.

A Note of Thanks

“We thank you ever so much for your outpouring of love during Paul’s illness and passing. Each prayer, thought and card was such a source of strength and happiness for him...when he went home to be with Our Lord, we were blessed with a beautiful celebration of Paul’s life at his church home for many years. Your kindness and compassion for all of us was so genuine and we know it will continue always. Thank you all so very much again. You are truly servants of our Loving Father.”
Sincerely, Sharon Bryan & Family



GROUP EFFORTS



DID YOU KNOW?

You can support the church with attentive giving at the end of the year. The end of the year is traditionally a time for review of financial matters, including your philanthropic plans. Cash is the most popular way to give and these gifts increase tax deductions when they are itemized on income tax returns. Giving investment securities that are worth more than they cost can result in additional savings at tax time. Capital gains taxes on securities that have appreciated in value may be able to be avoided legally when shares of stock are given to the church. Only gifts completed by December 31 can generate income tax deductions. Contact Eric Shields (ericshields12@gmail.com) for more information.

■ **HOMEFRONT MEALS PREP & DELIVERY—THUR., DEC. 15** If you can provide cookies, please call Dee Wilson at 737-7675. (Please note: The cookies can be store bought.) Have questions about HomeFront? Call Dee at the phone number listed above. ■ **BOOK GROUP** The PPC Book Group will meet on Mon, Jan. 16, 7:30 PM, at Jane Simpson's house to discuss Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston. No meeting in December. Newcomers are always welcome! Call Jane (466-4075) with any questions. ■ **ADVENT BOOKLETS** Advent Booklets are available to take home. They are free and may be picked up at the church office or in the Reception Room. ■ **BLUE CHRISTMAS VESPERS** This service will be held Sunday, Dec. 18, 4:00 p.m. in our sanctuary. If you are looking for a Christmas worship that brings hope into the real darkness of grief, sadness and the suffering of our world, join us for this meaningful time to acknowledge that darkness and claim the hope that comes through Christ's light. ■ **PPNS CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION** This annual event will be held on Saturday, December 10th in Heritage Hall. There are two sessions of the CCC – the first runs from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., and the second runs from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. The CCC is a fun event for children and families, featuring crafts, games, refreshments, songs, and the Nativity Story. Children may visit with Santa (who is in a separate room) if they wish. Part of the CCC is the Silent Action, which is set up in Coats Hall this week. Proceeds from the CCC and the Silent Auction support the school's scholarship fund and improvements to our playground. If you'd like to attend the CCC or have questions, please call Hope Anderson at 320-3285. ■ **CHRISTMAS TREE** Many thanks to the Batchelder Family for providing our beautiful Christmas Tree in the Reception Room! ■ **PPC INQUIRERS CLASS** Are you looking for a church home? If so, come to our Inquirers Class to learn more about Pennington Presbyterian Church. On January 8, January 15, January 22 and January 29 during the education hour (9:00 - 10:00 am) the group will meet to learn more about our worship, our goals and vision, our many internal and outreach programs and our church building itself. Child care is available. Please contact Rev. Nancy Mikoski or Joe Tully if you are interested. (nancy@pennpres.org or call 737-1221 x 14 or jmp.tully@verizon.net)

PENNINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Return Service Requested

