

THE BELL TOWER



Paris Presbyterian Church
127 Steubenville Pike
Burgettstown, PA 15021
724-729-3450
Rev. Dr. Christina Hosler

Greetings PPC family and friends!

I wonder how many people made New Year's Resolutions this year. The most common resolutions each new year are: exercise more, go on a diet, spend more time with family and friends, quit a bad habit, and cut back on spending/save more. Those are commendable resolutions, but I wonder how many people have already abandoned them. A recent Gallup survey indicated that 80% of people who make resolutions on New Year's Day abandon them by February. Yikes! That does not inspire much confidence.

What I have realized over the years is that just because I *want* to do something, doesn't make it happen. So this year instead of glibly making resolutions that have no hope of changing my life, I spent some time praying and asking God to show me the things that God wants me to work on. Since the inception of the pandemic, I have lost track of the things that are important to me and my personal wellbeing. I am aware that I am the only one who can turn things around (with God's help, of course). After much time in prayer, journaling and meeting with my accountability partner and spiritual director, I have a solid plan to get myself back on track.

The pandemic has changed all of our lives, in big ways and small ways, but as we begin a new year, I want to encourage all of you to take care of yourselves. I don't mean make a bunch of resolutions that have no hope of being fulfilled. Take care of yourself physically by getting vaccinated to protect yourself against COVID and wear a mask when you're out in public. If you're not vaccinated, please wear a mask to protect yourself and others. (I don't want to have to change our current worship practices again.) You can also take care of yourself physically by getting some exercise. That doesn't mean you have to join a gym; just get up and move around your house or apartment.

I encourage you to take care of yourself mentally and emotionally. The pandemic has taken a toll on our mental health as we've been quarantined and not able to socialize the way we were used to. Reach out to a friend, neighbor, or someone in the church family. Sometimes it helps our own mental state when we reach out and help someone else. If you are really struggling with mental health issues, please reach out to a professional. You can reach out to me, and I will help as much as I can, or I will put you in contact with someone else who can help. Remember that you are part of the body of Christ, and you are not alone.

Finally, I encourage you to take care of yourself spiritually. Spend time each day in the Word of God and in prayer. Many of us are doing the Year of the Bible this year and others are doing the Daily Lectionary. We have both of those resources available in the church office. Stop by and pick one up or give us a call at the office and we will mail one out to you. Our spiritual health is crucial to our overall wellbeing. Remember the words of Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, and a light on my path." May God bless you and your loved ones in 2022.

Rev. Tina



UPDATES ON CHURCH ACTIVITIES

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Because of COVID, many Fellowship activities had to be cancelled. Because of a lull in the virus this summer, the committee managed to have the annual Corn Roast. About 100 people had a very good time eating corn, hot dogs, and watermelon in the pavilion followed by listening to Bluegrass music on the front lawn. Thanks to all who set-up, cooked, and cleaned-up.

The Thanksgiving Dinner was held both as eat-in in the Social Hall and take out. The traditional dinner was served to 42 people, and 40 dinners were take-out,

The left-overs were taken by Willie Balt to the stable hands at Mountaineer Race Track. She told the committee that the stable hands are not paid much money and are often hungry. Thanks to everyone who helped, and to Greg Chwala for being in charge of the kitchen.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS



New grandparents, Donna and John Bendick want everyone to know that their daughter, Nikki and her husband, Bryan recently welcomed a new baby boy, Brooks Milo Churilla. Congratulations!!!



Kathy Alvarez retired at the end of 2021 from the Burgettstown School District Administrative Office an assistant bookkeeper. She plans to watch her two grandsons, Hayden and Paxton, full time. She says she will love every minute of it.

Donna Bendick also retired from working for 35 years for AAA. She was well known for her smiles of welcome to those who were planning trips or getting special prices. Donna will be watching her new grandson and can't wait to begin.

Since we do not see each other as much because of COVID, if you have family news that you would like to share, call Barb LaPosta (724-729-3725). The next newsletter will be before Easter.

CHURCH CRIER

NEW SESSION MEMBERS APPROVED

New members of the Session are Leslie Killen and Bobby Jones, and Jerry Shumate. Stephanie Visnic, Dennis Jancart, and Victor Carducci will stay on Session. Session members now serve a 2 year term.

Those finishing their terms are Stacy Riggs, Kelly Ward, Jeff Trump, and Barbara LaPosta. The church would like to thank them for their dedication and work during their term of office.

Congregational Meeting



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 23

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, January 23 at 10 AM between the two services. Usually there is a dinner before the meeting, but because of COVID, the dinner was cancelled. The Committee Chairs will answer questions about their reports, and the business meeting will include Rev. Tina's Terms of Call and the budget for 2022.

There needs to be a quorum to make the meeting official so please plan to attend. If you can't come, there will be extra Annual Reports in the office.



NEW BIBLE STUDIES AND SMALL GROUP TO START

Rev. Tina will begin two new Bible Studies and start a new small group. The first Bible Study will be 4 weeks long and will begin January 26 from 10:30-Noon. It will be based on faith and the Beverly Hillbillies.

The second Bible Study will begin on March 2 which is Ash Wednesday (first day of Lent), The study is called *I Arise Today* and is a 40 day journey through St. Patrick's Breastplate Prayer.

Both of these groups are coed. Please contact the office if you have questions or will be attending either or both of these studies.



WOMEN'S SMALL GROUP TO FORM

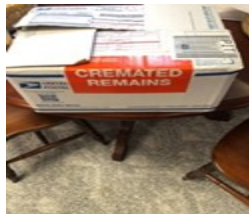
A small group for women will be starting on Thursday, January 20 from 6:30-8 PM at Rev. Tina's house. It will be a 6 week study called, *A Season of Praise*. Call the office if you are interested or just show up.

In a Box
By Rev. Tina Hosler

I don't share a lot of things on social media, but I posted something on Facebook last year as I was reflecting on some very significant personal loss. Some folks asked me to share it with all of you. As you all know, our Music Director, Gary Baughman, passed away late in 2020, and we had his memorial service at the church in June. Gary was cremated, and I received his ashes in anticipation of his upcoming service of remembrance. Gary and I had been friends for about 20 years, so his loss touched me deeply.

At the beginning of 2021, my friend Joyce was diagnosed with cancer. Joyce's parents and my parents were best friends, so Joyce was a part of my life since the day I was born (she was just a few years older than me). We were very close. We traveled together, and we talked several times a week, even though she lived in California. In May of last year, when I learned of the severity of her condition, I was planning a trip out to see her so that I could say "goodbye," but she passed away before I could get there. She lost her battle with cancer and went to be with the Lord. Joyce was never married and had no children, so she was cremated and her ashes were sent to me.

As I received her ashes and had them sitting at my house next to Gary Baughman's, I posted the following on Facebook and entitled it *In a Box*:



Friends, this is the 2nd time this year that a very dear friend has arrived on my doorstep in a box. Yes, 2nd time. Yes, in a box. The friend that arrived today knew me my whole life. I know that box is heavy because it holds not only my friend, but all of the conversations, laughter, memories and secrets we shared over the years. Both of my friends left this world too soon, but I am so grateful that they both knew Jesus Christ. They had unwavering faith, and because of that I know I will see them again. In one way or another, we all end up in a box, so before you do, I want to encourage all of you to turn your hearts to the Lord. No matter what you've done in your life, you can be forgiven if you confess your sins, repent and believe. Romans 10:9-10 reminds us, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved." Friends, when your loved ones are looking at you in a box, it is too late. Don't wait. Make Jesus the Lord of your life today.

(continued on next page)

(In a Box continued)

As I wrote that, I had no idea that the very next day I would receive a call from the hospital that yet another friend was at the end of his life. The doctor himself called me and said, “He’s asking for you.” I told the doctor I was 2 hours away and the doctor said, “If you leave now, you just might make it.” So I left. I sat at his bedside holding his hand. I know that many of you have been in this situation. What do you even say to someone who not only was *part* of your story, but *was* your story? You don’t talk about regrets or mistakes because earthly issues seem insignificant. You simply say, “I love you,” and you talk about Jesus. And then you hold their hand as they transition from this world into the arms of Jesus.

Less than a week later, he arrived on my doorstep in a box. Another friend. Another box.

At times it feels impossible to process the depth of those losses. But even as I continue to grieve, I am utterly overwhelmed that those last 2 friends chose me to make end-of-life decisions for them. They both named me as their next of kin. They literally trusted me with their lives. In death, they trusted me with their remains. I am humbled beyond words. I knew those relationships were important to me, but I had no idea the depth of their trust and love for me.

Friends, you never know the impact you are having on another person. Be kind. Show grace. Extend forgiveness. Love.

I don’t want to be preachy, I just wanted to give you a glimpse into my heart.



BECAUSE OF.....

Don't you hate it when a store clerk tells you they are out of something you need because of COVID. Sometimes we don't appreciate things until we do not have them anymore.

A friend once told me that when she was a teen their house burnt down. Before the fire she wanted a house like some of her friends—big, expensive, nice, and pretty. She envied them their good fortune. After the fire, she just wanted her house back—her room, her clothes, her things.

Recently someone said to me, "I wish things would go back to the way they were before COVID." Maybe this is a time to appreciate what we have not what we wish we had. We can take time to look around and see beauty even in winter, we can communicate with friends even if we do not visit them, and we can thank God for what we have even in the midst of a pandemic.

It's probably easier to complain than to do. It's easier to stop than to start something new. It's easier to place blame than to look at ourselves. It's easier to be lazy than to help.

Because of COVID we should revise outlook on life...love more, give often, laugh every day, appreciate what we have, forgive, and be a blessing in someone's life. That's how you beat COVID!



REVIVAL IN 2022

By Gail Johnson

“...verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” (Matthew 17:20-21)

A man brought his son to Jesus for healing after the disciples were unable to help him. His son was possessed by a devil (see v. 18). Jesus rebuked the devil, the devil was cast out of the child, and the child was healed within the same hour. Understandably, the disciples then asked Jesus why they had not been able to cast out the devil. Jesus told them it was their unbelief that rendered them powerless to heal the child.

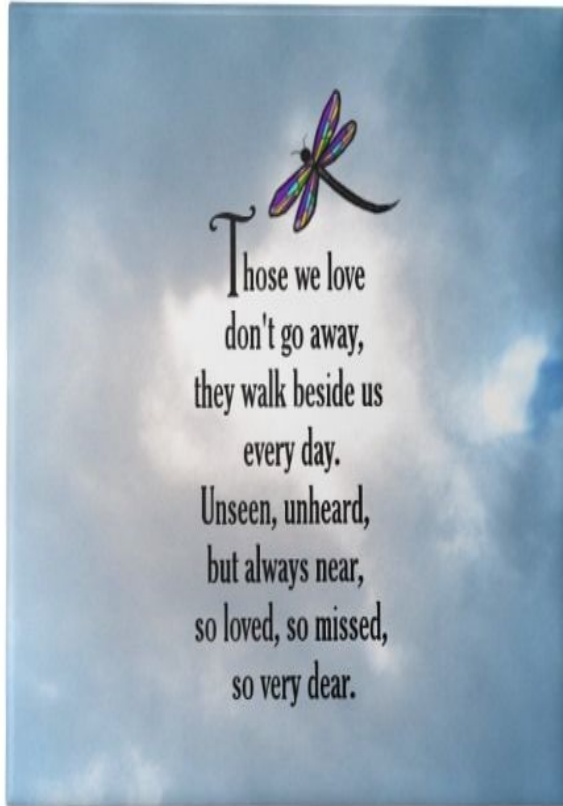
Do we Christians have faith that can move mountains today? Would we be willing to fast and pray to see God bring about revival or spiritual reawakening in our country and throughout the world? Maybe we should ask ourselves how earnestly we want to see this happen. A good place to start is to look at the revivals beginning in the 18th century.

The First Great Awakening (known as the Evangelical Revival in the United Kingdom), took place in Britain and the 13 American colonies in the 1730s and 1740s. Revival theology was built around the necessity for salvation in Jesus Christ; and there was also an emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Conversion was not only an intellectual exercise; an individual also needed to experience new birth in the heart. One of the revival leaders in England, John Wesley, eventually became the founder of the Methodist church.

In the early 18th century in America, the Congregational church dominated in the New England colonies; the Anglican church was the official church of the southern colonies; and the middle colonies saw Quakers, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and other faiths competing on more or less equal terms. The early revivals of the 1710's and 1720's started out on a local level in New England among the Congregationalists. Evangelical Protestantism eventually resulted, emphasizing outpouring of the Holy Spirit and personal experience of the love of God. This Evangelical Protestantism was a blend of New England Puritanism, Scots-Irish Presbyterianism, and European Pietism (a movement within Lutheranism which places emphasis on individual piety).

The Second Great Awakening (late 18th century-mid-19th century) brought about, among other things, a re-emphasis on Wesleyan teachings on sanctification, leading to a distinction between mainline Methodism and Holiness churches. There was a Third Great Awakening around 1855-1930, and some people believe there was, in addition, a Fourth Great Awakening in the late 1960's/early 1970's (the Billy Graham era).

The point here is that many Christians believe that the time is right now for another revival. This will happen in God's sovereign time frame according to His will. Back to my original question: are we willing to fast and pray to see revival? And do we believe this could take place in our lifetime? I'm asking myself whether I'm ready for a season of fasting and prayer. Will you ask yourself the same question?



IN MEMORIUM

Our church family offers our deepest sympathy to the families of:

**Thelma Grozdan, Hunter Mathess,
Faye Gordon-Hileman, Louie Spano,
Peggy Englert, Ellen Croce, Jack Staley,
Esther Anderson, John Gates, Donna Spano,
Jim Reedy, Sr., Ronald Thompson,
Ada Hargest, and Sam Noah.**

ORCHIDS AND ONIONS

ORCHIDS: To those who call shut-ins and those who have been ill.

ORCHID: To all who have gotten their shots and boosters.

ORCHIDS: To teachers, 1st responders, and health care workers.

ORCHIDS: To Iannetti's Garden Center for the beautiful poinsettias that still brighten our homes.

ORCHIDS: To the road crews for clearing our roads.

ORCHIDS: To Austin and Shawn for bringing friends and fun to Game Night.

ORCHIDS: To the Tech Team for all the up-grades to the on-line worship services.

ORCHIDS: To all who make soup on Wednesdays.

ONIONS: If you haven't volunteered for your 1 thing in the church.

ORCHIDS: To the new Session Members and those who just finished their terms.

ORCHIDS: To Rev. Tina who helped carry lots of groceries to Shirley. We all can help our neighbors who are ill or elderly.

ORCHIDS: To Lauren Scapellato for working in the office while Judy was on vacation.

ORCHIDS: To everyone because orchids are beautiful and so is everyone because God made us.

ORCHIDS: To all who are coping with COVID, grief, divorce, loss of jobs, high costs, moving, etc.

The Light Has Come!

The season of Epiphany reminds us that the Light that was with God at the beginning of Creation has come to Earth to make a home. John 1 calls the Light the “Logos,” which was a Greek word used by philosophers like Plato and Aristotle to describe the divine reason that is present in nature. The *Logos* is the logic behind everything we see and don’t see. Today we might use scientific laws, DNA, or atoms to describe similar building blocks of nature. This *logos* is the language of God, through whom God spoke things into being. John tells us that the Light that came into the world at Christmas is none other than this *logos*, the Word of God: Jesus.

And yet, when this power behind all creation, the Son of the Most High, comes in human flesh, he is not found in the halls of Greek philosophers. He is not found in the King’s court or in the chamber of the religious scribes. He is found in a stable, born to humble young parents who weren’t yet ready for their lives to be upended by a child. Instead of making his home in the places of Greco-Roman power, the Gospels tell us that astrologers from the far East followed the Light, followed their powers of reason and deduction, to find the Christ child.

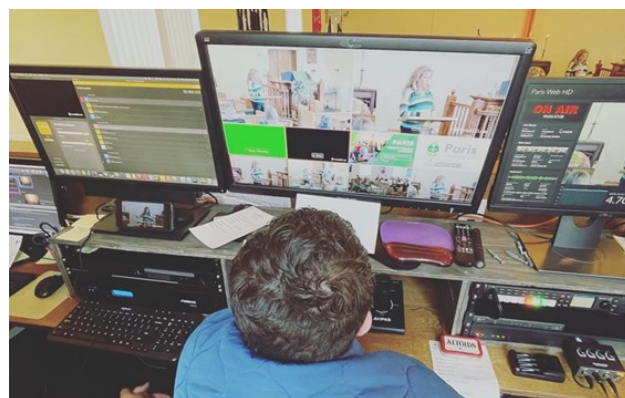
Matthew’s Gospel tells us about these astrologers to remind us that the true King of the world, the *logos* behind all creation, the very substance of life itself is to be found by all who seek him.

Jesus will be found by those who don’t have all the answers but have a lot of questions. Jesus will be found by those who don’t know the first thing about our Scriptures. The Light will be found by those, like the Magi, who use whatever means they have to search for the Truth.

These Magi, these foreigners from Persia know where Truth is to be found, and it isn’t in the halls of Caesar. They know to listen to the One who challenges them to go another way. It is the “gentiles,” the “pagans,” the “non-believers” who listen to and find the true King. May we be open to all who come seeking the Light of the world with their questions. May we offer them the true Light who has come, is present with us, and will come again.

Joel D. Peterson

Director of Outreach & Development



Upcoming in the Gathering Place:

Valentine’s Day Dinner Concert (Fellowship Hall) – Friday, February 11 at 5:30pm
(Dinner served at 6)

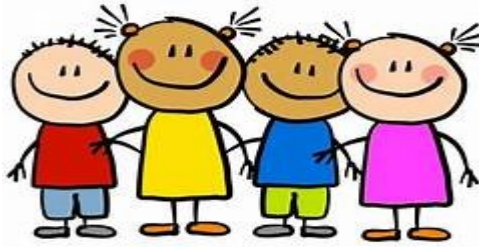
Soup Wednesdays continue in the Gathering Place every week at Noon.

We have a great line-up of Lunches with the Author being scheduled for the Spring! Dates TBA.

Plans are being made for our 2022 Summer Concert Series. Please forward any suggestions to outreach@pariseco.net.

Financial Update:

As you will see if you receive the annual report packet, faithful giving enabled us to finish 2021 in the black with operating income of \$263,102 and operating expenditures of \$262,975 for a surplus of \$126. This spending includes \$11,700 authorized by Session to substantially upgrade A/V systems, including in the sanctuary, to enable a more professional live broadcast of worship. Feedback has been very positive. Session & the Budget Committee also authorized the purchase of a new digital sign, to be installed this month, from the restricted Building Improvements Account. The approved budget for 2022 is \$277,668 (or \$5,339 /week). As you plan your budget for the year, pray about how God might direct your giving. As we set aside the first 10% for God, as the Church does through outreach, God provides for our daily needs.



WHY STAY IN THE HOUSE?

Do you realize you are missing a great big world when you stay indoors? Video games are fun, and TV is entertaining, but life and death games are going on right outside your house. If you have a bird feeder, hawks nose dive to grab small birds. They stay very still in nearby trees or bushes, then hover near the feeder while choosing the bird they want for dinner. It seems cruel, but hawks need to eat to; it's the way of nature. You miss all the drama if you are in front of an electronic screen.

One year my husband and I went fishing on the Chesapeake Bay when it was so cold, the water froze on the fishing line. The wind was blowing, the mist from the water froze on our faces, and our fingers were so cold that we thought they might fall off, however, we caught big fish. At the end of the day, beside being cold, we had seen fish jumping, birds diving for fish, deer getting drinks, a fox, and white caps whipping across the bay. I remember what we saw, more than how cold it was.

Life is a series of adventures. We can stay at home and in the house, or we can discover the world around us. God gave us so much to see, hear, and be a part of. Life is all around us, and we just have to experience it.

You can pretend to be early pioneers and build a hut to stay in at night; in the spring you can read about plants that you can eat and those you can't and then look for them. You can identify the trees in your neighborhood, see how many types of animals live around you, and identify how many plants grow in your yard.

A walk in the woods is interesting anytime of year. God would smile if He knew you love His planet. Learning about it and appreciating it will help keep it clean.

SILLY JOKES FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES

QUESTION: What do you call it when a snowman has a temper tantrum?

ANSWER: A melt down.

QUESTION: What's a snowman's favorite drink?

ANSWER: Iced tea

QUESTION: What did the icy road say to the car?

ANSWER: Want to go for a spin?

QUESTION: Where do snowmen put their money?

ANSWER: Snowbank

QUESTION: What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

ANSWER: Frosted flakes





INVASIVE PLANTS

The root word for invasive is the same as invade, and invasive plants do indeed invade. Most weeds are considered invasive. (We know because we pull them out, cut them down, and spray them with weed killer, however they keep coming back.)

Every year the National Agricultural Department chooses new plants to add to the invasive plant lists. According to the *Washington Observer*, one of the plants added this year is the Callery pear or better known as the Bradford pear. They will be phased out in the next two years and then will not be sold anymore.

Even though it is a beautiful tree, it is spreading quickly, and many people are allergic to it. It was over used by landscapers, and now has become a pest. Another plant that should not be used is the Japanese barberry. It spreads, its thorns can hurt animals, it harbors ticks, and is taking over the undergrowth in the woods and forest.

When God made plants and put them on the earth, He created good and bad bugs. To the native plants in an area He provided natural immunity. These bugs may do some damage, but they will not eradicate a species.

Exotic (non native) have little immunity, and many times attract diseases and bugs that kill them. Look under the Department of Agriculture for PA or WV for information on native plants that grow well in our area.

WHY AREN'T CHILDREN OUTSIDE?

When I was a child (in the Dark Ages), we couldn't wait to get home from school to go sled riding in the winter, or play flashlight tag or hide and seek in the summer. We came in at dark, ate, did our homework and were ready for bed because we were tired.

Now kids don't go outside to play. Winter is a great time to go sledding, have a snow ball fight, or make snow angels. It is also a great time for a winter hike to see what is about in winter weather. This year on the Hanlin Station Road, I saw a bald eagle, a red tailed hawk, a coyote, fungus on trees, deer, turkeys, and trash. If we do not teach our children to appreciate nature, they will not grow to love it when they get older.

When I was little, an old man told my dad to take time to do activities with me "Because the years too fast go." He was right. Our children will remember a walk in the winter woods with hot chocolate when they came home. We think things count, but our time is very valuable and memorable.

We have two local treasurers in Raccoon Creek State Park and Tomlinson Run State Park. Both have lakes (I was at Raccoon about a week ago, and there were several people including kids out fishing. It was a nice day, and the kids seem to be enjoying themselves.

I hiked all over Tomlinson Run when I was at Girl Scout camp there. I loved when we just sat quietly and observed nature. We wrote down what we saw in a journal, and we all found something to write about. So I'm asking again, why aren't kids outside? Not all knowledge is in books, much of it is in nature!

PARIS PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH

**127 STEUBENVILLE PIKE
BURGETTSTOWN, PA 15021**

NON-PROFIT

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**PERMIT # 54
WEIRTON, WV 26062**

SERVICES: Sunday 8:45 (Contemporary) and 11:00 A.M. (Traditional) Sunday School: 10:00 A.M., SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES: Mondays: 7:00 PM (church) ; Wednesday: 7 P.M. (Kim Ura

JANUARY:

19-New women's Bible study (on-going)
23-Congregational Meeting, 10 AM
Between Services
26-Coed Bible Study at church 10:30-Noon

FEBRUARY:

11-Valentine's Day Dinner at 5:30 PM at church
14-Valentines Day
21-President's Day

MARCH:

02-Ash Wednesday (Lent Begins)
New Bibe Study begins, 10:30-Noon,
church
17-St.Patrick's Day