

# THE BELL TOWER



Paris Presbyterian Church  
127 Steubenville Pike  
Burgettstown, PA 15021  
724-729-3450  
Rev. Nadia Stropich

## **HALLELUJAH!! OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED.**

After much prayer and discernment, our Session is pleased to announce that Rev. Nadia Stropich has accepted the call to be our Transitional Pastor. She will preach her first sermon with us on November 27, and all are invited to attend. Please join us for cake and coffee between services for a “meet and greet” with Rev. Nadia, her husband Shawn, and their daughter Madelyn. Rev. Nadia and her family will be moving into the manse and re-locating from Glen Allen, VA.

Rev. Nadia comes to us with a wealth of experience in leading transitional churches, mission ministry and children's ministry. She has lead both rural and suburban churches and was drawn particularly to us because of our outreach. She has done her homework on Paris Presbyterian Church and is looking forward to partnering with us to determine our goals and visions to call our next permanent pastor.



## IT'S TIME FOR POINSETTIAS

Every year on Christmas Eve, our church is decorated with poinsettias. After the Christmas Eve service the plants can be taken home.



With your order, you can specify if you want the plants to be in honor or memory of someone. You can also choose to give the plant to a shut-in if you do not want it.

The plants come from Iannetti's and are always full of blossoms and well cared for. If stores leave plants where they get cold drafts, they will drop their leaves after a few days.

This year the cost of the plants are \$9.35. Please fill out the form in the bulletin and place with a check in the offering plate or drop them off in the office by November 27.



## SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

For about 19 years, our church has participated in the Salute to Hospitalized Veterans or affectionately called Valentines for Vets.

One year, we send the cards that we make to the Veterans' Hospital in Pittsburgh, and the next year we send them to the Veterans' Hospital in Clarksburg, WVA.

Some Vets are in the hospital for a short time, but many of them are long term residents whose families live out of town. Getting Valentines is a highlight for them.

Last year we passed out bags with card stock, stickers, and markers. This year the bags will be ready for pick-up on Sunday, January 14 and 21, and they must be returned by January 28. I was quite impressed that all of them were returned on time last year. This year we will be making about 200 Valentines for the Pittsburgh Hospital, so we will need a lot of help. This is a good project for kids to help with. It teaches them empathy for others, and children who volunteer usually volunteer as adults.

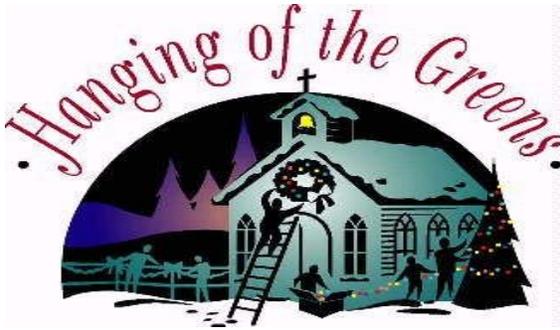
## CHRISTMAS CARD EXCHANGE

Christmas cards are part of the traditions of Christmas, but with the cost of cards and stamps, some people have quit sending them.

To alleviate the costs of stamps, our church has a Christmas card table with placards with initials on them. Place cards behind the right initial, and people can look to see if they received any. Remember, if you don't send any, you may not get any.

If someone would like to pass out cards, feel free to do so at each service. Remember our shut-ins who may not be able to send any cards, but they would love to get some.

# CHURCH CRIER



## HANGING OF THE GREENS

Can you believe that it is time for Hanging of the Greens? The first Sunday in Advent is November 27 so the decorating of the church will be on Sunday, November 20 at Noon. (The good news is there is no 1:00 Steeler game that day so no excuses for not staying.)

We will need some strong men and teens (women too if you are strong) for carrying the Christmas trees and boxes. We have a lot of new decorations this year so we hope to have everything sorted so that everyone knows where the new decorations go.

There will be grab-and-go snacks so please come, and help. Call Barb LaPosta for more information.



## HELP NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Our Christmas Eve Service will begin at 7:00 P.M. and will have a nativity play and communion. Actors are needed for the play (great news, no lines to learn). Children and adults will be needed. The play calls for 2 shepherds, an innkeeper, Mary and Joseph, 3 kings, King Herod, and the Angel Gabriel ("and a partridge in a pear tree.." Just kidding, couldn't resist). Please contact Leslie Killen, in the evening ,if you are interested in participating. (412-266-6784) (If you don't call her, she will be calling people for help.)



## GREAT NEWS! OUR CHURCH OFFICE TO BE OPEN 4 DAYS A WEEK!!!

Since our church secretary began working part-time, the church office has only been open on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Although someone checked the phone calls daily, it was difficult to communicate messages.

Cindy Richards, one of our former secretaries, has agreed to work on Mondays and Fridays. If you remember Cindy she always had a smile on her face, and she was one of the most efficient secretaries that we ever had. Tuesdays messages will be checked and will be passed on, or they will be dealt with the next day.

## THERE WILL BE NO CHURCH THANKSGIVING DINNER THIS YEAR.



## UPDATES ON CHURCH ACTIVITIES

### OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

This year, so far, 161 shoe boxes have been filled for children around the world. That is a few boxes less than last year, but some people have not turned in their boxes.

If you did not make a box this year, you can still donate money for the postage which is \$9 per box. Just make a check out to the church then designate the money for the Shoe Boxes.

Think about the child who lost everything in a tornado or flood, or the child in Kenya that is starving from a famine, or the child who is so poor that he/she has never had a gift. Along with the gifts, they also get to learn about Jesus. Now that is a Christmas gift.

Sue Marsh would like to thank everyone who made boxes, donated money and items for the boxes, and to those who took their time to help sort the contents and fill the boxes. We would also like to thank Sue for organizing this big project.



## TRUNK OR TREAT

Goblins, giggles, witches, wonder, funny, scary—lots of kids, proud parents, mixed liberally with bags of candy, and you have Trunk or Treat.

On October 23rd, the parking lot was filled with cars decorated for Halloween, and car trunks filled with candy. Over 60 children participated, and they left with smiles and bags of candy.

Winners of the “best decorated cars” and gas card winners were Aggie Wiltrout and Sammi Patterson. Congratulations!

Thanks to Outreach for planning and organizing this fun day. Special thanks to Karen Cowan and all the volunteers. Thanks also to those who donated candy.



## WHAT VALUES AND ETHICS DO YOU INSTILL IN YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN?

When our daughter, Leslie, was little, I loved to listen to her talking in her room to her stuffed animals. One day I realized that she was mimicking everything that I said to her. If I had yelled at her, she yelled at her animals for the same infraction using the same inflection in her voice as I had used. It made me stop and think! What was I teaching her about how to handle problems and people?

Everyday our kids and grandkids watch us—how we speak, how we act, how we interact with other people, what we believe, and if we do what we say is right. We can't have children learn in Sunday school that it is wrong to take the Lord's name in vain, and then we do it everyday. We have to practice what the Lord tells us to do so all the children involved in our lives see us following God's rules.

We should teach our children about faith and how we use it in our everyday lives. When was the last time that you told a child in your life about a God sighting?

We should read the Bible to our children. Instead of Dr. Seuss or *Frozen*, we should read Bible stories. Tell them what they mean, and God will help us just as He helped the Israelites.

How about praying with your kids and grandchildren—before school, during meals, before bed, before and after a trip, for someone who is ill, for their friends,—the list is endless. People were splitting nails about prayer being taken out of schools, but how many of those folks pray at home?

Teach your children tolerance. One of the best things about being a military family was that we met people from all over the world. Some were a different color than us; others were of different religions; some had no religion; some came from different countries where the culture was different; many did not speak English; and some looked down on us, and others looked up to us. We learned so much from each of them. Some we liked, and others, we did not. Not because they were different from us, but because our personalities did not gel.

Practice kindness with your child. Smile, invite, call, say please and thank you. Show them how to treat everyone with respect. Using the digital salute and cursing when someone cuts you off in traffic is not how to handle anger. What did your child learn? Criticizing others who are less fortunate than you is wrong. By the time this paper goes out the election will be over. I hated the ads from both parties. No one said what they would do, they just said hateful things about each other. What does that teach our children?

Our children watch how mothers and fathers treat each other. Abuse begets abuse. How children treat others begins when they are small because they watch and listen to those in their lives. What will they see from you and others in your family? Remember, you are their first and most important person in their lives whether they say it or not. What example are you setting for them?



### WEDNESDAY SOUP DAY TO TAKE HOLIDAY HIATUS

The "Soup Committee" chaired by Gayle Johnson and her great volunteers has announced that November 16 will be the last soup day until after the holidays.

Soup Wednesday will begin again on January 4. Volunteers are needed to make soups. Coming to the church for a bowl of soup and seeing friends or taking soup home, is a nice relaxing way to have lunch. The best thing is someone else makes it. Become a part of the "soup group."

### UPDATE ON THE GOAT GUYS

Remember the guys with the goat who stayed at our church? On day 113 they were leaving New Mexico heading toward Snowflake, Arizona. The mother of one of the guys met them along the way and walked for a distance with them.

When they get to LA, they will have walked over 2800 miles. The goal of this stroll is to raise \$1,000,000 for the Knights Ministry which is based in Chicago. The Ministry provides housing, health care, and a variety of social services for people who are homeless or living in poverty. The guys have raised \$12,000 so far.



## ACCOUNTABILITY

By Gail Johnson

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.  
2 Corinthians 5:10 (NIV).

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2 (KJV).

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. . . . Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one converts him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. James 5:16, 19-20 (KJV).

These scriptures clearly convey the message that we are accountable to Christ and to each other.

Why don't we embrace the idea of accountability?

Fear. If the thought of being completely vulnerable and open with another person causes fear, consider Proverbs 27:17: "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (KJV). By having just one mutually trusting relationship where we are completely honest with each other, we might see more Christians enjoying peace with God, which can bring about a joyful countenance. In a mutually trusting friendship, there is no fear that our confessions will become the subject of gossip. See Proverbs 11:13, "A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter." (NKJV).

To find the right person to be our accountability partner, we could start by looking for a Christian who displays the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23, KJV). Of course, the person we choose is going to look for those same qualities in us.

Pride/self-righteousness. “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18, NIV) If I am too proud to confess my sins before another person, will I also be too proud to confess my sins to God? See 1 John 1:8-9 (KJV): “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We all need the daily cleansing from unrighteousness that only confession can give.

Time. I believe the enemy uses our objection of lack of time to keep us from Christian disciplines such as Bible reading and prayer and service to God. We all have 168 hours each week. It's true that our time commitments are different for each of us – some of us are working parents who feel that we have very little control over our time; some of us are retired and make our own schedules. Others of us are caregivers. As partners in accountability, you have control over where and when you will meet. You only need an hour or two once a week. Be flexible. If you and your partner are totally booked up Monday through Friday, could you commit to meeting after church every Sunday at one of your homes, or at a nearby coffee shop? In the warmer weather, maybe you'd prefer a picnic table at a local park. Keep it simple so you will stand by your commitment of meeting once a week, and you will soon see yourself growing spiritually in ways you never imagined.

Since we know that each one of us will appear before the judgment seat of Christ one day, it will be of great benefit for us to start practicing confession of our sins now.

I hope we will ask God to reveal to us if we have what it takes to be an accountability partner. If we all start faithfully practicing biblical accountability, we could start to see more evidence of spiritual growth in our own lives and the lives of other Christians.



may you know  
the comfort & joy  
of God's  
presence this  
Christmas  
season & always!  
[jucoolimages.com](http://jucoolimages.com)

## REMEMBRANCE

© Alora M. Knight

Let everyone gather  
With no heartaches or tears.  
Let the bright memories flow  
From all the past years.

Let there be music,  
Familiar old songs.  
Let flowers stay in gardens  
Where their glory belongs.

Let peacefulness reign  
'Til the evening sun sets.  
Let no words be unspoken,  
Then there will be no regrets.

True love's everlasting  
Through eternity.  
So brighten the world  
In remembrance of me.



## IN MEMORIUM

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

**Paul Cunningham, Betty Scott, Evelyn Buckley,  
Zebadiah Kaiser, Colleen Moore,  
Mike Andrews, Bess Harrison, Patty Astfalk,  
George Sargis, and Cole Shergi.**

## ORCHIDS AND ONIONS

**ORCHIDS:** To Sue Marsh and the volunteers who helped pack, donated boxes, and to all who donated money and items.

**ORCHIDS:** To Karen Cowan and the volunteers who helped make Trunk or Treat so much and those in our church who donated candy.

**ORCHIDS:** To Patty Noah for organizing Blessing of the Pets and for those who helped her.

**ORCHIDS:** To the Session for all of their work to find a Transitional Minister (interim).

**ORCHIDS:** To everyone who has pitched in to help keep things going.

**ORCHIDS:** To our congregation who continues to honor their tithes and offerings.

**ONIONS:** To all who one find negative things to say about people and activities.

**ONIONS:** If you did not vote. No complaining if you don't vote.

**ORCHIDS:** To God for giving us a beautiful autumn.

**ORCHIDS:** To all who share their God Sightings. Sometimes it is hard to share our inner most feelings.

**ORCHIDS:** For Karen Lee Rogers for joining our choir, and to all of the choir and Praise Team Members for giving of their time and talents to give us beautiful music on Sundays.. Also a bouquet of orchids to Liz for leading the music.

## TECH TEAM UPDATE FROM AUSTIN MICHAEL

Technology is ever-changing... I previously talked about where our technology was and how far it has come. PPC has shown to grow even during the darkest time and technology is no different. Since June I have taken the Tech Team out of their home church to view another church's set up to show how similar our experiences are, we have expanded our tech team to 13 members, and even built an app but before I get into that I want to talk about church technology as a whole.

In my position, I have made my own goal to continue my education within church ministry and church technology. The Christian Church as a whole has changed more within the past 5 years with technology than ever before. "In 2015, as many as 50% of churches didn't even have a website," says WNCC. As a church, we have been given many opportunities to reach people from all over the world, and sometimes we do not act on those opportunities nearly as much as we should. I love this quote from Tom Rainar: "Not learning how to effectively use social media is like a missionary moving to a country and refusing to learn the language." In my mission here at PPC, I have taken that and used it to push myself to learn as much as I can to empower my team and congregation to use what they have and can learn to further the kingdom of God.

Knowing how important technology is within churches we made a point to talk about it during our Pentecost Planning meeting and that was important for us to determine where we see our technology going. One of the biggest things we discussed was how to centralize our technology usage so that our members and visitors can use each opportunity to its full potential and that solution was an app. What does the app do to solidify those potentials? The app brings the church to its pocket. The PPC app is a sanctuary on the go this allows our church family to worship and praise whenever and wherever they are and they can share that experience with whomever they want. Taking this a step further we have also made it possible for the congregation to easily give for their tithes and offerings fast and simply within the app and also keep updated on events.

This is just the start of what we can do. We can not wait to get started with messaging within the app to bring together our small groups and hopefully gain more. With all of those abilities, it is bound to confuse. Be on the lookout for an App Coaching class so that you can get the most out of your app.

Overall PPC is still expanding in every direction when it comes to technology. If you ever have an idea, never hesitate to bring that to a tech team member. My motto has always been not if we can do it, but how we will do it and as 1 Peter 4:10 says "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

## From Where I Sit

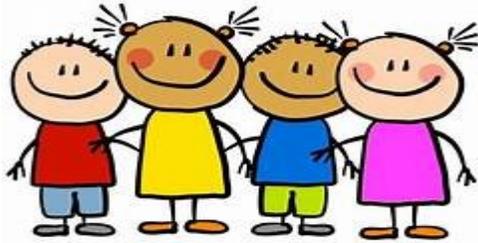
Growing up as an Army brat, it was hard to call someplace “home”. I would spend summers and some holidays with my grandparents and during those visits, I attended Paris Presbyterian Church with them. I always felt so special...I was Barney and Gertie Hanlin’s granddaughter, and everyone was so welcoming at church. I felt like I belonged. I remember sitting in the pews and the feel of the Bibles and hymnals in my hands. I remember my grandmother telling me I had a beautiful voice as I sang the hymns (trust me Liz, I do not!). I remember listening to the sermons and feeling that I was a part of something special. And I was...I was a part of the Paris Presbyterian Church even when I lived in Germany and Virginia. From where I sat, I felt welcomed whenever I came.

Once Jake was born in Virginia, after the tragic events of 9/11 and living so close to the Pentagon at the time of the attacks, I decided it was important to me for him (and later Justin) to grow up around family. Although we lived closer to Pittsburgh, we would come to services at Paris, and my children became part of the Paris Presbyterian family as well. I have the best memories of Paul and Dell Barkhurst sitting in the pew behind us and playing with both Jake and Justin when the boys were babies and toddlers. Jake loved performing in many of the skits at church, and Justin sang in the choir. Becoming an official member of the church made me so proud, and I felt that I had officially become part of the Paris Presbyterian family. From where I sat, I felt that I belonged.

Then I was called by God to step way out of my comfort zone and serve on Session. I know that the pandemic led to decisions that not everyone agreed with. I will have to say, however, that I am in awe of God’s grace that we have been able to stay open when numerous churches were forced to close permanently. The diligent work of the Tech Team allowed us to continue worshipping together when we were unable to be together in person and has allowed us continue to reach people around the world. I know we all grieved the time we lost in person, and now we grieve the loss of Pastor Tina. Although change can be difficult, it is not a bad thing if we allow ourselves to embrace the changes and the opportunities that are ahead of us.

Now from where I sit, I see endless opportunities for growth and outreach. But Session cannot do it alone. I have been told that people want to be asked directly to help with certain activities. The problem is that you are the only one who knows what your “1 thing” is. Whether it is joining the Worship or Outreach Committees, joining the choir, making soup or a dessert for the Wednesday lunches, playing a part in the Christmas Eve skit, calling and checking in on someone who has not been in attendance for a while....God is calling all of us to do something. So to everyone reading this, I am asking you to listen to how God is asking you to become involved with making Paris Presbyterian Church the best it can be for now and for generations to come. We are family and together, we can grow Paris into the amazing church we know it can be. From where I sit, we are amazing!

Leslie Killen



## “ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS.....”

Back in the Dark Ages when I was a child, stores did not put out Christmas decorations until after Thanksgiving. My dad and mom put up our Christmas tree on Christmas Eve after I went to bed and before Santa came. When I got up on Christmas morning, I saw the tree all lit up with my gifts underneath.

Before Christmas, I had to clean out toys that I no longer played with and inspect them to see if they were broken or good. We then took the good ones to Salvation Army to be given to kids who had very few toys.

I also had to help my mom bake cookies which we delivered to those who were ill or elderly and lived near us. I also had to take money out of my piggy bank and put it in the Salvation Christmas Kettle for those who needed clothes or food.

Christmas at our house was not just about what I would get, but it was also about what I would give. When I was a kid, I did not always like giving things away including money. I did not believe that giving was better than getting because I wanted, I wanted, and then I wanted some more.

Stores used to mail Christmas catalogues that arrived the Friday after Thanksgiving. I looked at them until the pages fell out. I wanted almost everything in the book. My mother would tell me if I got all of those toys, then other kids would not get what they wanted. O—K I would say, but I’m not sure I meant it.

Now, I realize I can’t even remember what I got for Christmas 5 or 10 years ago. But through the years, I remember what gifts I made or chose for friends and family. I love to see people’s faces when they get a gift that they really wanted. I still like gifts, but I really like giving them!

## SILLY JOKES FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES

**QUESTION:** What do you get when you cross a Christmas tree and an apple?

**ANSWER:** A pineapple.

**QUESTION:** What do gingerbread men use when they break their legs?

**ANSWER:** Candy canes.

**QUESTION:** What do you get when you cross a snowman and a vampire?

**ANSWER:** Frostbite.

**QUESTION:** Why did the Christmas tree go to the barber?

**ANSWER:** He needed a trim.

**QUESTION:** What do you call an elf wearing earmuffs?

**ANSWER:** Anything you want, she can’t hear you.

**QUESTION:** What happens if you eat Christmas decorations?

**ANSWER:** You get tinselitus.





**BELIEVE IT OR NOT,  
IT'S NOVEMBER,  
AND CHRISTMAS IS COMING!!**

Christmas shopping is not hard, but trying to figure out what to buy is. Have you thought about gardening tools for the gardener in your family? This summer I broke a shovel—not digging but prying. I know better but... So I purchased a new shovel. I could not believe how easy it was to dig with it. My shovel was my dad's so it was ancient. We do not think to buy new gardening tools until they break, but the new ones make life easier in the garden.

Some suggestions for gifts for the gardener:

New hoe, rake, shovel, loppers, a plant auger to dig holes for bulbs, a two wheeled cart, yard bag for easy clean-up, or a sprinkler

A stand-up weeder. (They are great for flat weeds like dandelions, etc.)

A gift certificate to a local plant nursery such as Iannetti's.

A gift certificate to a hardware store or box store for tools.

Subscriptions to garden magazines.

A unique house plant.

Garden decorations, including solar lights and stakes.

A stone with the street address on it.

Pay for someone to take classes to be a Master Gardener. (Call Barb LaPosta for information-724-729-3725).

If you are not a gardener, these gifts may sound bad, but gardeners will love them.

**TIPS FOR PROTECTING  
WINTER PLANTS AND  
CONTAINERS**

If you have roses that are new or in a windswept part of the garden, mound soil around them and then use coconut coir basket liners from hanging baskets over the soil. (Cut a hole in the bottom of the liner.)

If you don't want to bring in plant containers for the winter, after taking out the old plants, let the soil dry out and cover with a heavy duty plastic bag. Secure the ties and place under bottom of pot. Covering the pots also keeps cats out of them.

Wrap young trunks of trees to protect from frost cracks. The outer bark cools and shrinks faster than the inner layer and will tighten and split cells as the weather gets cold again. The frost cracks make ideal places for insects and disease to enter. Wrap the trunks with tree wrap or paint them with white latex paint which will reflect sunlight and keep the trunk from getting too warm.

Water bushes or trees if the temperatures stay above freezing for several days. Wind will cause plants to dry out. There is a good product called Wilt Stop that keeps plants from water loss. Lightly tramp on soil, if heaving occurs from freezing and thawing.

**PARIS PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
127 STEUBENVILLE PIKE  
BURGETTSTOWN, PA 15021**

**NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
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 Uram's: On line groups available.**

**NOVEMBER:**

**11: Veteran's Day  
20: Hanging of Greens—Noon  
24: Thanksgiving Day  
27: to preach as new Transitional  
Minister**

**First Sunday in Advent**

**DECEMBER:**

**Christmas Card Exchange begins  
24: Christmas Eve Service—7:00 P.M.  
25: Jesus' Birthday  
31: New Year's Eve**

**JANUARY:**

**01: 1923-New Year's Day  
16: Martin Luther's King Day**

**FEBRUARY:**

**14: Valentine's Day  
20: President's Day  
22: Ash Wednesday—First Day of Lent**