

West Swamp News

Volume 14, Issue 2

December 2024/January 2025

My first year as Moderator Deacon

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FYI

- The Zook's Chicken Pie fundraiser brought in \$275 towards outdoor sensory play equipment for the playground area. Thanks to all who participated!.
- Need an alternative gift? Check out MCC's Christmas Giving catalog at <https://mcc.org/christmas#/>!
- Save the Date: The Annual Business Meeting is January 26.

It is hard to believe that another year is winding down. Soon 2024 will be just a memory. The days do seem to go faster at this time of year with all the planning, preparations and special holiday activities that will be occurring as we await the birth of Jesus on that special night all those years ago.

Along with countless others, I look forward to the upcoming Advent Season with all the Christmas trees, the festive lights and decorations, but most importantly, hearing the retelling of the story of Jesus' birth. I look forward to hearing it through both Scripture and the timeless carols and hymns sung every year.

They say that we learn something new every day. This has been especially true for myself

since answering the call to the role of Moderator Deacon and leader of our Ministry Team back in January. It has been an amazing experience to learn and to see just how much goes on behind the scenes to keep things flowing. I am truly grateful to Pastor Michael, our Deacons and everyone serving on the various committees for sharing their talents to help keep things running smoothly. We are truly blessed here at West Swamp.

One of the highlights of 2024 was the support we received to build a new playground. I thank those who took the initiative to work to make it all come together to make it happen. We have taken the first big step to create something that is a fun and safe place for families with young chil-

dren to come and enjoy. Through its creation, perhaps they will want to discover and learn more about our church and become part of our family.

Finally, during this season of joy and giving, I invite everyone to bring a smile to someone in need by shining your light with an act of kindness. It could be something as simple as holding a door, checking on a neighbor, or even a simple hello. And be sure to take the time to give thanks to God for the gift of Jesus and the light that He brought into the world all those years ago. Merry Christmas!

~ *Carl Raub*

Pastor's Corner: Hope for a weary world

By the time you read this, we will be in the last week before Advent starts. As you know, Advent is the season before Christmas, when we anticipate celebrating the birth of Jesus. It's a joyful season of preparation. In our culture, the season of Advent is overlaid with a season of increasing consumption that begins with Black Friday the day after Thanksgiving and crescendos on Christmas Eve, as desperate people comb depleted store aisles or print out images of gifts that will be delivered after Christmas. That's sad.

Here's the truth: Jesus said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 10:35). What would it be like if, this year, rather than giving people things they don't need, you took the money and gave it to the Quakertown Food Bank or the Code

Blue homeless shelter? Then you would be obeying Jesus' command in Matthew 25 to feed the hungry and shelter the unhoused.

This Advent, we will be going on a journey together. On the first Sunday of Advent, each person will receive *A Calendar of Devotions*, written by Charity Goodwin. This booklet, provided by the Discipleship Commission, has a Scripture passage, a short reading and a prayer or practice for each day of Advent. I encourage you to use the booklet in your daily time of prayer and Bible reading. If that's not a part of your daily pattern, the booklet represents a great opportunity to begin the practice. If you would like to discuss the Scriptures and readings with others, that's what we're going to be doing in the TLC (Topics, Learning and Con-

versation) Class during Advent. We meet in the conference room upstairs at 9:30 on Sunday mornings.

In the Christmas song *O Holy Night*, the lyrics say: "O holy night, the stars are brightly shining/It is the night of our dear Savior's birth./Long lay the world in sin and error pining/Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth./The thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices/For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn."

Right now, our world is weary. Weary of politics, weary of war, weary of struggle. I invite you to find in Jesus this Advent the thrill of hope, because in him there is hope, there is life, life to the full (John 10:10).

Peace,

~ *Pastor Michael*

Worship: So Christmas Day is on a Sunday this year!

Lunch bunch will take an official break for December, as the season becomes busier. There may be a group who will still go out to eat on Dec. 15—ask around if you're interested and not too busy.

We will start again in January. Come out to lunch with us, and

catch up on each others lives with a time of fellowship and fun. We always have laughter, which is good for the soul! See Mark Kemmerer if you'd like to join us. On Jan. 19 we are going to Pizza Randa in Quakertown.

~*Joan Hallman*



DISCO: Continue the journey

Discipling Commission encourages you to continue on your journey with God and practicing the ways of Jesus. Our Sunday School class options are as follows:

- The Bible Project Class continues its deep dive into Genesis. Abraham's life is coming to a close; Isaac and Rebekah are coming to the forefront. Rebekah is the first in a pattern of women from non-chosen lines of humanity who are used by God to save the day or save "the seed" (Gen. 3:15). Can you think of others? Ask someone in the class.
- TLC Class: This Advent season, the entire congregation will be given a daily devotional resource prepared by Charity Goodwin. This calendar

of devotions is meant to give you an opportunity to focus on the journey to Christmas at home, all the while knowing your West Swamp community is doing the same. Beginning Dec. 8, the TLC class will be used as a time of reflection and discussion based on the devotions from the previous week. "Let's journey together with expectancy and the hope of transformation!"

The next Prayer Breakfast is Dec. 1. Please see the sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall for ways you can contribute. This will be a lighter breakfast since it follows a busy week in the kitchen for many of us.

~ **Katie Mood**



Community happenings

Poinsettias for a cause

This year's Christmas flower sale will benefit Mennonite Central Committee's Hurricane Relief fund. Order forms for beautiful poinsettia plants are in your mailboxes, or can be found on a windowsill in the Fellowship Room. Please place forms in the basket there, or email what you would like to Nancy Jacobs by Nov. 27 at dnjacobs@com-cast.net.

If you don't get an order in, don't fret. There will also be some extras available on the delivery date: Sunday, Dec. 8. Thank you for supporting this Community Commission project. We wish everyone a blessed and merry Christmas!

Christmas—Time for sharing

West Swamp will be participating again this year in the Christmas Carnival hosted by the Salvation Army of Upper Bucks and the Quakertown Ministerium on

Saturday, Dec. 14. We've become known for making some of the best Christmas cookies, so this is a call to all **"Christmas Cookie Bakers!"**

If you are able to bake cookies, we would like them at the church by Friday, Dec. 13 at 6:30 pm, when we will start packing the cookies. Feel free to drop off your cookies and stay to help package them. It will be a merry time!

~ **Nancy Jacobs**

Worship: From Advent to Epiphany

You're seeing Christmas decorations everywhere—the Advent of Christmas—anticipating the day of Jesus' birth. The season begins on Dec. 1 with the first Sunday of Advent and runs through Epiphany on Jan. 5. During this season, we will be singing Advent and Christmas songs each week. Join us as we light the Advent candles, counting down to Christmas Day.

Also, we will hold our Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 7 pm. Invite family and friends for a night of music and scripture celebrating baby Jesus.

With the new year approaching, have you considered trying something new? Would you consider being a worship leader? After Sunday worship on Jan. 12, Pastor Michael will lead a workshop, "How to do what you do." This is for all worship leaders, and for

those who are curious and may like to give it a try. Added incentive: lunch will be provided!

One more thing: Beginning in January I will be playing twice a month for our worship services—once on piano, once on the organ. I enjoy playing for services, but it's become a little too much to handle with my schedule. Lynne will cover the other Sundays. Thank you for your support.

~ *Joan Hallman*

Stewardship: Looking for lawn help

Other than bimonthly building inspections and maintenance work it has been another quiet month for the Stewardship Committee, which is always a good sign. I want to thank Don Jacobs and his cousin for noticing and rewiring some of the burnt out carport soffit fixtures for LED lamps so that we have better visibility going into the non-daylight savings season.

Also, it has been so dry that no one has been thinking much about mowing grass, but Leon has decided to step down from doing all of the lawn mowing along with Jim Snyder. Their efforts have been greatly appreciated and they have donated more than their fair share of time to keep costs down on exte-

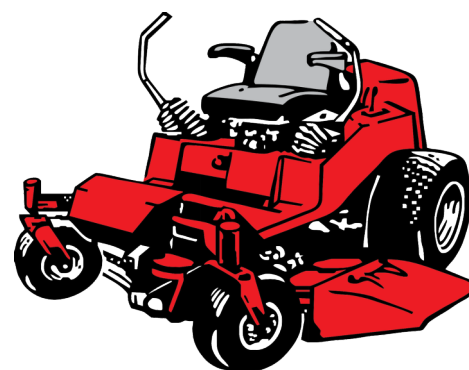
rior maintenance for years. I encourage everyone to personally thank them for their hard and reliable work. In the meantime, please reach out to me if you would like to pitch in towards lawn mowing and care. Jim (a non-member) has offered his services at a fee for some time yet, but I will be looking for additional assistance to help or handle this work going forward, whether paid or unpaid.

I hope to keep things running smoothly with the facilities as we move towards the holiday season, and am expecting to prepare for spring improvements and maintenance over the winter. In addition, we will be purchasing some replacement seating for the fellowship hall as

enough of the chairs have become unsuitable for use.

Thanks to all who have and continue to assist with stewardship of our West Swamp.

~ *Alex Parzych*





DRINK COCOA AND DO

Fundraiser to Benefit the

Quakertown Code Blue Homeless Shelter

Everything \$1.00

Hot Cocoa (free toppings) and Baked Goods

Date: Sunday, December 15

Time: Stop by between 2:00 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.

**Location: Front Yard of 207 North Ambler Street,
Quakertown (Look for the Yellow Tent)**



My name is Caleb; I'm 14 years old and a 8th grader. When I was 7 my family took a trip to Baltimore, MD. There I saw many people who were homeless. This made me very sad, and I wanted to help them. On the ride home, my parents told me that there were people in Quakertown who were homeless, and that there was a shelter in town for those who are homeless to sleep in at night. I knew I wanted to help raise money for the shelter! After some brainstorming, I came up with an idea to sell hot cocoa in the winter, and my family said they would help me. We started the stand in December of 2018 and thanks to God, the community, my family and friends – we have raised approximately \$19,000 total for the shelter! I hope that you will be able to stop over and have some hot cocoa, eat a sweet snack, chat with friends and enjoy the live music.

LIVE MUSIC

Hope to see YOU there!



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Reflecting God in our
living, loving and serving



December

12/4 Dennis Wieand
12/7 Debbie Bauman
12/9 Penny Rice
12/10 Ophelia Parzych
12/11 Jasper Riley
12/15 Louise Butcher

Calendar of Events

December

1, 9:30 am—Prayer Breakfast
4, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
4, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
10, 7 pm—Mission Commission
13, 6:30 pm—Cookie Packing
14, 10 am—Christmas Carnival
15, 2 pm—Caleb's Cocoa Stand
17, 7 pm—Ministry Team
18, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
18, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
19, 12 pm—Senior Luncheon
24, 7 pm—Christmas Eve Service

January

1—Church offices closed
5, 9:30 am—Prayer Breakfast
7, 8 am—Knotting resumes
7, 7 pm—Community Com.
8, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
8, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
14, 7 pm—Mission Com.
16, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
19, 12 pm—Senior Luncheon
21, 7 pm—Ministry Team
22, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
22, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
26—Annual Meeting
28, 7 pm—DISCO

Regular Activity

No Knotting in December, resuming Jan. 7
Tuesdays, 8 am—Knotting & Quilting

12/16 Sue Gwilliam

Brent Rice

Seth Rice

12/17 Madison Mood

Evan Wieand

12/19 Bill Grube

12/20 Ossie Myers

12/24 Elliana Kirkpatrick

12/26 Glenn High

12/27 Bob Leber

Elaine Propst

12/29 Charles Spiess

12/31 Kevin Huff

January

1/3 Cameron Parzych

1/4 Grace Opdyke

1/5 Jamie Smith

1/11 Tom Mood

1/29 Katelyn Opdyke

1/30 Rod Rush