

The Falling Waters Messenger

Issue Twelve

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Advent Fun Facts!

The season of Advent has its beginnings in the early church and throughout the centuries people around the world have developed a variety of fun and interesting ways to mark its passing. Advent always begins four Sundays before Christmas and is the beginning of the church's liturgical calendar year.

The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus* which means *coming*. In the early church, Advent was a time of prayer and confession. Today, it's more a time of preparation and anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ and is celebrated in a variety of ways around the world.

The Advent Wreath has four candles, each representing the four Sundays (four weeks) of Advent. Tradition holds that each week represents one thousand years, so in total, four thousand years from the time of Adam to the birth of Jesus, the Christ.

Advent Calendars are largely a secular custom, to mark the 24 day count down

to Christmas Eve. The first door/window is opened on December 1, a date whose main function is to remind us that there are only 24 more shopping days until Christmas. The world's largest advent calendar is the Gengenbach Town Hall building in south-west Germany. Each evening, one of the town hall's 24 backlit windows is ritually unveiled to reveal a colorful festive image.

Until the beginning of the 19th century, every English town had a band of official musicians called "**waits**". They were like musical traffic wardens, with special silver chains and uniforms, engaging in civic business such as waking people for work on dark winter mornings, welcoming visiting dignitaries and leading mayoral processions. Their instrument of choice was the shawn, or "wait-pipe", a very loud woodwind instrument that sounds like a cross between a trumpet and a vuvuzela. In 1835, they fell victim to the Municipal Reform Act, which attempted to overhaul local government corruption and

conryism. The name survives in "Christmas waits", otherwise known as "carol singers".

In Alpine countries, children carry a statue of St. Joseph to a different home each night during Advent. Carry the statue of Joseph from your crèche to each child's room, where it will spend the night, and then move it on the next day. On Christmas Eve, put Joseph next to Mary in the stable.

In the Middle East, people use the "Barbara Branch" to mark the countdown until Christmas. Named after St. Barbara who is said to have been martyred in Egypt, a twig from a fruit tree, usually a cherry, is placed in water. If the "Barbara branch" blooms on or before Christmas day, the family will have good fortune. This custom recalls the prophecy in Isaiah that the Messiah will spring from the root of Jesse.

It's summer down under in Australia, and homes are decorated with fresh flowers. Break out the grill and barbecue hamburgers on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

In the Phillippines, Advent is marked by attending Mass nine days in a row (called Misas de Aguinaldo, or Gift Masses), beginning on Dec. 16. If you can't make it to Mass all nine days, try to attend at least a few days of daily Mass.

In Latin America, a Novena to the Holy Child (La Novena del Niño), nine days of prayer, is traditionally held during Advent. Make your own family novena by singing a different carol each night beginning the first Sunday of Advent.

However you choose to spend this season of waiting, I pray these traditions invite you to a deeper understanding and appreciation for this time of watching, waiting, and vigilance.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Debra



Pray Without Ceasing

Billy and Bill Berg
Jimmy Cloud
Kenny Cushwa
Mary Hodges
Irvin Horst
The McKune Family
Pete & Scott Mekkelson
Virginia Snyder
Bill Zombro



December Greeters

3 Ruth Berg, Gwen and Phil Noll
10 Ruth Berg, Marge and Richard Chamblin
17 Ruth Berg, Joan and Don Campbell
24 Ruth Berg, Robin Brown, Helen Brown
31 Ruth Berg, Rob and Tina Sloan

Happy Birthday

2 Jason & Beth Henry
5 Lily Campbell
6 Carolyn Linton
12 Ernie Weidman
15 Yvonne Lantz
20 Holly Stolpiher
21 Laura Peach
22 Nancy Linton
27 Richard Chamblin
25 Bea Taynton



Pastor's Holiday Open House

You are invited to an **Open House at the McKune's** on Sunday afternoon, December 10th from 3:00pm - 5:00pm. Join us for some sweet and savory treats, holiday music, and fun and fellowship. Our address is: 16041 Cloverton Lane, Williamsport, MD 21795. If you get lost and need help finding us, please feel free to call Pastor Debra's cell phone: 304.839.8998. Hope to see you there!

Amazing Grace Fund



Plans are under way to ensure that approximately 20 disadvantaged families in our local area are provided fixings for a Christmas dinner, a turkey, gifts (for children) and other essential products. Tuscarora Presbyterian Church is already working on the food boxes and children's gifts. Therefore we here at FWPC plan to provide the turkeys and other essential necessities. This is where we need your help. Boxes have been placed in the Fellowship Hall and downstairs to collect items such as **(lots of) toilet paper, paper towels, bar soap, laundry and dish washing detergent.** Anyone wanting to make a donation please contact Beth Henry (274-2112) or Brenda Carper (274-3053). Items are needed no later than **December 4.** Your kind gestures will change lives.

Women's Christmas Brunch



The **Women's Bible Study** group will meet, Wednesday, December 13, at the home of Jeanie Cushwa at 10:00 a.m. for brunch. There will be no lesson but they will have devotions, and sing Christmas carols. Please bring a covered-dish to share. All ladies are welcome to come. Jeanie's address is 117 Adrian Drive, Martinsburg.

Movie Night

Please join us for **Dinner and a Movie** on December 16. We will meet for dinner at 5:00 at Cracker Barrel, followed by the movie, "A November Christmas" at 7:00. We will have refreshments and door prizes.



Nursery Attendants

December 4	Heather and Archie Locke
December 11	Anna and Adam Collis
December 18	Kristie and Steve Redding
December 24	No Nursery
December 31	Katie and Michael Campbell



During Advent there will be two **Angel Trees** in the sanctuary on the landings going up to the balcony.

Please feel free to bring an angel ornament of your own to place on the trees in memory or honor of a loved one. If you wish your love one's name to be included in a list, please see Crystal Mason.

“The Splendor of Christmas”

Come celebrate with the **National Christian Choir and the National Christian Childrens Christmas Choir** on Saturday, December 2 at 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. at International Community Church, Frederick, MD.

General Admission is \$20.00 with the Director's Circle tickets at \$30.00..Order on line at www.NationalChristianChoir.org or by phone at 1-301-670-6331 or toll free 1-800-599-4710.

Our own Nat and Jacob Hylton, Abigail and Alison Howard Gois, Gracie Cramer, Ellie Sloan and Kadence Blaine are members of the Children's Choir and Jeanie Cushwa is in the Adult Choir.

You will be filled with Christmas Joy as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior.

Join Us!



Join us on Friday, December 22, to go caroling at Homewood and Williamsport Retirement Village. We will meet at the church at 6:00 p.m. to car pool.

We will return to the church for hot chocolate and cookies.

Flock Notes

Congratulations to **Crystal Mason and Anna Marie Collis** who were recognized at the Community Thanksgiving Service on November 21 for their volunteer work with the flood victims in Richwood and Birch River, WV. So many have been blessed by their hard work and generosity.

Congratulations to the **FWPC sponsored U10 soccer team** for winning the season championship. Michael and Pamela Fleagle coached and Alex Fleagle played. The team thanks the church for its generous support.



Congratulations and best wishes to **Katie and Michael Campbell** who were married on October 28. Katie is the daughter of Reyna and Michael Fallon of Gettysburg, PA. Michael is the son of Jeff and Renee Campbell and grandson of Joan and Don Campbell.



LADIES OF FWPC
(ages birth to mature)

Please join us for a Cookie Exchange
on
Saturday, December 9, 2017, at 2:00 p.m.
Fellowship Hall of FWPC

Bring four dozen cookies to share
(and a container to take home your goodies)
and
a wrapped Christmas ornament for a fun game
exchange if you wish to participate
(max. \$5.00 value – homemade is great)

Please R.S.V.P to Renee at 304-676-8175
(text or message)
or at jeffnee85@yahoo.com or by Messenger
or to Fawn at 304-754-8211 or fwpcusa@gmail.com

'Tis the Season



The birth of Jesus gave joy to a people who had been waiting for the Messiah. His birth fulfilled one promise and made another. Jesus changed the lives of people he met and touched and he continues to change the lives of people he touches—through Scripture, through the Holy Spirit and through the people who follow him today. We, here at FWPC, have the opportunity to share that joy this holiday season.

Advent calendars, “Let Love Speak”, are available in the vestibule. These devotionals connect us as we read the same passages of scripture each day. Please take one.

We will begin the Advent Season with a “**Hanging of the Greens**” service on December 3 at 10:00 a.m. when we will bring our sanctuary alive with holiday color.



December 10 is the **Children’s Christmas Program**.

December 17 is the cantata, “**Morning Star**” by Lloyd Larson. A covered-dish Fellowship Dinner will follow immediately.



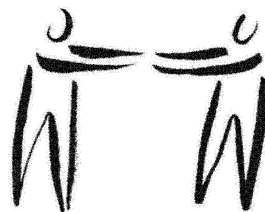
Christmas Eve Service

December 24 is our **Service of Lessons and Carols** at 10:00 a.m. **There will be no Sunday School, nursery or coffee hour to follow.** The **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** will be at 11:00 p.m.

A **Morning Prayer Service** is being planned for December 31, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. An **Intergenerational Sunday School hour** is planned.

North Berkeley County Loaves and Fishes Needs You

Our Christmas Eve Offering will benefit **Northern Berkeley County Loaves and Fishes** located at Hedgesville United Methodist church. Hedgesville Loaves and Fishes is made up of volunteers who help



Reach out to those in need

distribute food to the poor and people who are struggling through hard times, whether it is from illness or a loss of job. The Hedgesville United Methodist Church has provided space for a pantry to store and distribute food on the 4th Friday of each month from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. the only exceptions are November and December which we distribute on the 3rd Friday due to the holidays. All of the food comes from the generosity of the churches in our community and personal donations. Normally it feeds 60-70 adults and 40-45 children each month. Your assistance with food and cash donations is always greatly appreciated. Food donations may be dropped off at Hedgesville United Methodist Monday through Thursday from 9:00 - 1:00. Please call 754-8793 to be certain someone will be there to assist you.

A NOTE OF



Thank you all for the wonderful fellowship, cards and gifts you shared with me on Pastor Appreciation Sunday. I am humbled and profoundly grateful for your generosity and support.

With great affection,

Pastor Debra

Good News of Great Joy!

In this season when we celebrate the child born in Bethlehem, we also realize that the birth of Jesus ushered in a new realm of God's love at work in the world. This love causes us to recognize the image of God imbedded in all humankind. It compels us to reach out with charity, justice, and grace. We seek to honor every child of God. This, too, is how we celebrate the child born on that first Christmas day.

Presbyterians can respond to that love at Christmas by giving generously to the **Christmas Joy Offering**. The offering helps students at racial ethnic schools and colleges develop their gifts and find their calling to serve God through serving their community. At the same time, the Offering helps families of both active and retired church workers to meet unexpected needs. As we celebrate Jesus' love in our lives this Christmas, our gifts bear joyful witness to the power of that boundless love that changes lives.

What Is the Christmas Joy Offering?

For more than 70 years, Presbyterians have given generously at Christmas to support the unmet needs of families who have devoted their lives to the mission of the PC(USA). Today this Offering is shared equally by the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, which provides critical assistance to Presbyterian church workers and their families, and Presbyterian-affiliated racial ethnic schools and colleges, which enable students to develop their gifts and find their calling. The Offering dates back to the 1930s, when the former Presbyterian Church in the United States began an offering to supplement inadequate retirement income and provide supplemental medical insurance for former ministers, missionaries, church workers, and their families.

Although its roots trace back many years, this special offering remains just as essential today. Equally important to the financial help provided is the spiritual benefit received. Again and again, the individuals and families helped by the Offering say that as crucial as the financial assistance is, what really sustains them is the knowledge that the church is standing with them in their time of need.

We will collect the Joy Offering on December 24.

Children's Program

Our preschool and elementary school children will present a **Nativity Pageant** during worship on December 10. It is always fun to watch our children recreate the Christmas story and remind us all of the true meaning of Christmas.



Live Outdoor Nativity 1963

In 1963 when Reverend Foster Couchman was pastor of the North Mountain Parish, which consisted of Hedgesville, Tomahawk, and Falling Waters Church, a live outdoor Nativity pageant was presented at the Linton farm on Route 9.

Vernon Armbruster was the director with the help of Art Blizzard and Arlington Linton and other folks from the three churches. The youth groups and other children were the participants.

Music and narrator were recorded and played as shepherds and the three kings in costume were spotlighted and would proceed across the field to the barn. Angels hung from the ceiling of the open barn.

One year, Brenda Cushwa Carper was Mary and Galen Runkels was Joseph. Brenda recalls riding across the pasture to the stable side-saddle on a donkey owned by the Cloud family.

In 1964, Bill Moore and Chip Blizzard were shepherds in the cold pasture. Hedgesville Methodist Church also participated and helped with the production that year.

The presentations were shown several times each night and held for two or three nights right before Christmas. Route 9 was very busy, and many cars drove onto the property while others parked on the side of the road for viewing.

Old newsletters show that the pageant was presented again in 1965. Those who remember have fond memories of going to the milk house to warm up and enjoy hot chocolate prepared by the women. However, the most vivid memory was – **it was cold!**

Ron Hansen and Bettie Jane Porterfield

Why Outreach?

If you have read anything in the last few years about how Presbyterian churches (and other denominations) are faring, you know that the answer is: not very well. A number of the old small churches in our Presbytery have closed recently or will close in the not-too-distant future. Will FWPC still be here in another 100 years – or even 35 years?

Roughly half of the active members and friends of the church (those who attend church more than a few times a year) are in the age group 65 and older. About a quarter are in the age group of 45-64 and a quarter are younger than 45. More than half of those 65+ are actively involved in serving the church in some way. Who is going to do the work when we are no longer able? Take a look around to see how many adult children and grandchildren of the people 45+ are active members of our congregation. Chances are good that most of our current children and youth will move elsewhere to find jobs as adults, so we can't count on them for the survival of our church.

Handing out tracts or knocking on doors isn't the answer. It isn't even safe to do that anymore. In contrast, the church's website is extremely important since that's where people today check out churches to decide what church to visit.

What studies have determined is that, except for some lifelong church goers, few people will come to a church these days just because it's there. A purposeful, determined outreach to the community is the best way to draw people to the church. Most non-church-going people aren't going to come until they get to know us outside of the church or during programs such as VBS, the concerts, and Community Day that bring them into the church where they can see who we are.

Millennials, the future of the church, have made it clear that they aren't interested in churches that don't "walk the talk." They want to see that we put feet and hands to work outside of the church building to carry out Jesus' commandments to feed his sheep and to make disciples.

The other extremely important component in attracting new members is hospitality. There is a vast difference between being friendly/welcoming and *acceptance*. How do we at the church systematically incorporate new people into the church? Do *we* invite them to go to coffee hour with us and sit with them? Do we look around at coffee hour and see people sitting by themselves and join them? Do we invite newcomers to our homes to get to know them?

This church has a rich history. But we aren't still doing things now in the way things were done 272 years ago, or even 50 years ago. That's because this church has evolved as the years have gone by and the culture has changed. Hanging onto the way things were done 30 or even 15 years ago is going to ensure that the church *won't* survive. In addition to programs that educate and nurture our current congregation, we have to spend our money on programs that will appeal to people who were not raised in the church or who left the church for various reasons.

How do you envision FWPC in 5 years? 10 years. How can we get from where we are today to where you'd like to see our church in the future? **The Outreach Committee needs your suggestions of what we can do to build relationships in the community.** What do you think we should be doing? If you are able physically, would you volunteer to help in the activity you have suggested? I welcome all suggestions for the Outreach Committee to consider. Please email your suggestions to me at johnkatebrown@comcast.net, mail them to me at 148 Avalon Trail, Hedgesville, WV 25427, or hand them to me at church.

Kate Lewis Brown