



## **Pastor's Letter**

**By Rev. Glen Reichelderfer, Interim Pastor**

What is it about the Advent Season that tugs at our heart?

I know that most of the world calls this time of year “the Christmas Season”, yet we Christians know better. We know that on the first Sunday in Advent, (December 3<sup>rd</sup> this year) the church calendar flips and we begin a “New Year”. We are just so out of step with the commercialized, consumer-driven world. Let’s admit it: we are an awkward people.

First, we celebrate New Year’s Day an entire month before January 1. And then, we (mostly) don’t sing Christmas carols until it is Christmas Day. No matter what radio stations might play.

Further, during this Advent Season, unlike the consumer-driven world, we do not get amnesia about the darkness of our world: families being forced out of their hometowns, immigrants fleeing oppressive regimes, children being targeted and murdered. In fact, we embrace this dark story. Each year, during Advent and Christmastide, we remind ourselves of a family back then which connects us to what happens all too frequently now to families in our own time.

We Christians don’t flinch from this darkness; we don’t deny this darkness; in fact, despite what our world does, we hold this darkness close because that is exactly where God chose to be born, where God’s LIGHT flickered on and began to shine. It makes no sense, but....that is what God did and does.

God allows us to see that God is not done with our world YET- that is what **hope** is; next, as we begin to honestly acknowledge (confess) the role we play in consenting, tolerating and promoting the darkness of our world, we unexpectedly are gripped by God’s **peace**; as we become more honest, we see through the false promises of happiness and embrace our darkness which allows us to be discovered by God’s **joy**; it is then that we have a greater capacity to accept God’s **love** for us.

No, our Christmas story is not all happiness and presents;



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It is filled with unexpected twists and turns, disquieting visits and disturbing dreams which give us hope, peace, joy and love- the true gifts of Christmas. I am glad that we are on this journey together- it is a journey that promises to give us the Christmas that we have always wanted. See you in Church!

Pastor Glen

**REMINDERS:**

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS-**

The church office is open from **8:30am-1:00pm from Monday through Thursday.** During off-hours, e-mails can be sent to:

**Pastor Glen ([pastorglen54@gmail.com](mailto:pastorglen54@gmail.com))**

**Kathy ([presby411@verizon.net](mailto:presby411@verizon.net))**

E-mails will be responded to as soon as possible. If you wish to speak to Pastor Glen, please call the office at **(845) 628-2365** during office hours, or e-mail the office directly to set up an appointment time.



**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING-**

This year's meeting is taking place after church on **Sunday, January 14, 2018.** It will be a "Soup, Salad, Dessert Potluck Lunch" (a good test run for soup makers ahead of our Souper Bowl Sunday event):

- Congregation members with last names starting with A-H are requested to bring in a soup.
- Congregation members with last names starting with I- Q are requested to bring in a salad.
- Congregation members with last names starting with R-Z are requested to bring in a dessert.

**\*\*All committee reports are due to the church office by Friday, December 29, 2017.\*\* THANK YOU!**



## **Recap of the Last Couple of Months**

**By Rev. Glen Reichelderfer, Interim Pastor**

It's about time for a check-in from your (temporary) Pastor.

Just to recap. There has been a flurry of activity since Christine and I arrived:

- Christine and I arrived on September 19<sup>th</sup> to live on a horse farm through the gracious offer of Carolyn and Raymond Liverzani. Our time there was precious because it gave Christine and me time to adjust to being away from our home in Madison.
- We immediately were warmly welcomed by you all. Some of you even laughed at my jokes (don't tell my daughters).
- Jennifer Sung, Kathy Cinquina, Elizabeth Narcissi and I have all developed solid, warm, open professional relationships. They have helped me gain my "sea legs." Each one of them brings wonderful gifts to be used for the good of the church. We are fortunate to have them on staff.
- I met Michele and Danielle at the Mahopac Falls Nursery School (MFNS). What a pair of hardworking, thoughtful, gifted teachers. Michele is a wonderful director- cares deeply about the children and their development. Please tell everyone you know about the wonder of MFNS.
- On September 27<sup>th</sup>, we began praying together at 11:30 on Wednesdays for the needs of the church. Some join us by

**Recap** (continued)

closing their office door where they work. That has been a constant and continues to be a source of Spiritual renewal in this church. I would suggest- THE Source. Over 15 different members of FPCM have participated at one time or another.

- I am bowled over by all the many people who helped make the Tag Sale a success.
- After buying and registering a car and meeting many more wonderful people, then came the Rummage Sale. What a time of fellowship that is and a LOT of work. Christine and I procured many necessary items for the Manse.
- More happened including Christine and I cooking and serving at Jan Peek House, the birth of Gia Elisabeth Cambigianis, the baptism of James Thomas Morrison, and the funeral of Janette Loughlin.
- Our Moving Day was on November 11<sup>th</sup>. It was sad to leave the cozy apartment at Raymond and Carolyn's place; yet, it was exciting to inhabit the beautifully transformed Manse. It was a busy- and fun- three hours of moving intensity.
- November 18<sup>th</sup> brought the famed Holiday Bazaar. Again, many people made that event a resounding success.
- I have enjoyed meeting with the Nominating Committee, the Worship and Personnel Committees, the Stewardship Committee, the Session (what a prayerful group that is) and the Deacons (good, caring folk).

**Now for my observations:**

1. There is a lot to celebrate in this church. People have fun working together.
2. There are good traditions- i.e. the Tag Sale, Rummage Sale and the Holiday Bazaar.
3. There are a lot of projects, both larger and smaller, that have been undertaken- i.e. the renovation of the Manse, the instillation of pea gravel for the MFNS Playground.

4. This is a caring congregation- people keep track of and visit each other.
5. Four people are becoming members of the church.
6. By the time January 7<sup>th</sup> rolls around, we will have two adult baptisms.
7. Sunday Morning attendance seems to be on the rise.
8. We launched an impromptu Stewardship Campaign and began to be upfront about what this church will need in order to reach a balanced budget (in today's parlance, to be sustainable).
9. The MFNS seems stable and is finding good footing.

In short, since Christine and I have been here, you have all taken a collective breath, continued what you do best, finished the Manse renovation, remembered how beloved by God you are, and celebrated what incredible gifts you bring to the table. Yes, there was turbulence last year. Yes, through the power of the Holy Spirit, you have made it through. God is still at work in all of us. I wonder what gifts we will be given during this Advent and Christmastide. For you see, God is not done with us yet.



## **Advent and Christmas Season Schedules**

### **Sunday, 12/3/17- First Sunday of Advent-**

8:30am and 10:30am services

9:15am- Sunday School

### **Sunday, 12/10/17- Second Sunday of Advent-**

8:30am and 10:30am services

9:15am- Sunday School

### **Sunday, 12/17/17- Third Sunday of Advent-**

8:30am and 10:30am services

9:15am- Sunday School

### **Sunday, 12/24/17- Fourth Sunday of Advent-**

**\*\*NO 8:30am service\*\***

9:15am- Sunday School meets to prep for the pageant (happening during the 10:30am service)

10:30am service- featuring the Christmas Pageant, Guest Singers and Guest Musicians

5:00pm- Family Christmas Eve Service, featuring Handbell Choir and Instruments

7:30pm- Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, featuring the Choir, the Handbell Choir and Instruments

### **Monday, 12/25/17- Christmas Day-**

**No Services**

### **Sunday, 12/31/17- New Year's Eve-**

**\*\*NO 8:30am service\*\* / \*\*NO Sunday School\*\***

10:30am service only

### **Advent Readers (10:30am service):**

12/3/17- Elizabeth Narcissi and Kathy Cinquina

12/10/17- Loretta Billington

12/17/17- The Narcissi/Cinquina Cousins

12/24/17- The Mack/Bogucki Family- Caren and Tori

