



**December 2024
Newsletter**

First Presbyterian Church of Hawley

*Sunday, Worship
Service - 10am*

*December 1, 2024
1st Sunday of Advent
Communion "Running
on Empty"
Jeremiah 33:14-16*

*December 8, 2024
2nd Sunday of Advent
"The Terror Child"
Luke 3:1-6*

*December 15, 2024 3rd
Sunday of Advent
"What Does Grandma
Want?"
Luke 3:7-18*

*December 22, 2024
4th Sunday of Advent
"I Could Almost Touch
Heaven"
Micah 5:2-5a*

*Tuesday, December 24th
Christmas Eve
"Now that is Good
Water"
Titus 3:4-7*

*December 29th - 11am
Community Worship
Service
St. Paul's Lutheran
Church*

*Worship online with
Facebook Live:
<https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresHawley>*

From the Pastor's Desk...

"It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah."

Matthew 2:26

One of the strange birth stories of Jesus is with the man named Simeon. He doesn't get much press time, only 10 verses. We are told he was a righteous and devout man, full of the Holy Spirit, and looking for the coming Messiah. Simeon has the gift of prophecy. Mary and Joseph traveled to the Jerusalem Temple, which was only 6 miles from Bethlehem. There Mary follows the purification rights for women and then the consecration rites for first born males.

Simeon enters and recognizes Jesus as the Messiah. He takes Jesus in his arms and exalts God, gives a prophecy, and blesses the family. I imagine the parents of Jesus were probably feeling a little anxious. Who is this strange man holding our child and saying these bizarre words? Perhaps they weren't so surprised given the strange events they had already experienced.

But Simeon intrigues me. Imagine waiting – day after day, year after year, hoping, watching, listening, praying, and then suddenly the Messiah appears. What joy he must have felt. The answer to all his prayers and the promise of God to him is fulfilled. He goes home to rest in peace.

Simeon was patiently looking forward to the consolation of Israel. What are we looking forward to during this Advent Season? Getting together with family, parties with friends, a certain gift, Christmas decorations, special music, a candlelight service, all good things mind you, hey I like a cup of eggnog too, but these things do not really capture Advent as much as we might want them to. They are rather trivial compared to Simeon's hope and devotion.

What are we desperately praying for, waiting for, and longing for that we are willing to watch and wait, perhaps for years? In our fast pace, quick result, hurry up and get it done, instant gratification world, my suspicion is not much. It takes great faith to watch for and seek the Messiah in our midst, but that is precisely what Advent is all about.

The word 'advent' literally means 'coming' or 'arrival' and it is a time of reflection on what the coming of Christ means to the world. It is also a time of looking for Christ in the world right now and forward to when he will come again.

Is our deepest desire for the Messiah to arrive, the Messiah who is, not necessarily the one we imagine? Is Advent more than checking things off our list? What are we looking forward to, the one who frees the oppressed, the one who brings good news to the poor, who sets the captives free, who heals the blind and the lame? Advent is coming, what are we watching for?

**By God's Wondrous Grace,
Pastor Mark Juengel**

COMMITTEE NEWS

Christmas Joy Offering The Perfect Gift

The prophet Isaiah gives those listening to him a very particular task to prepare the way for the coming Messiah, the person we know as Jesus. Isaiah proclaims that to prepare the way is to make highways easily navigable, fill in valleys, flatten hills, level the ground, make the earth smooth. Then, and only then, will God's glory be revealed, and this will cause all humanity to see that God has spoken to us.

Your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering combine with gifts from thousands of congregations throughout our denomination to do our part to repair the world and to ensure our siblings have the tools they need to flourish. Your gifts prepare the way for the God we know in Jesus Christ, the child whose birth we celebrate.

Following Jesus' example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

On **Sunday, December 22nd** we will receive the Christmas Joy Offering during our worship service.



- 12/1 - Parish Life Meeting
- 12/5 – Buildings & Grounds Mtg.
- 12/8 - Deacons Meeting
- 12/9 - 5:30pm - Missions Committee Mtg.
- 12/10 - 12:15pm - Worship & Music Mtg.
- 12/12 - 9am - Admin & Finance Mtg.
- 12/17 - 6pm - Session Meeting

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services at 7pm

Christmas Eve is one of the loveliest services of the church year. Through it we celebrate Christ's birth and presence among us. We sing, we remember, and we share the light of Christ with one another. Let us bear the peace of Christ to the world.

Worship & Music Committee ALS Interpreter

Our goal at First Presbyterian Church is to create a worship environment that makes all feel welcome, facilitates meaningful worship and spiritual growth for all and demonstrates our commitment to the differently abled in our community and our congregation. Many of you may have already met Autumn and her parents Colleen and Rich. To support Autumn in her worship experience and spiritual growth and to continue to evolve our church to actively meet the changing needs of our community, we will begin having an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for two Sunday's a month beginning in 2025. (This expense will be covered at 50% by a Presbytery grant.) In addition to supporting Autumn, we are hopeful that we may also reach other differently abled adults in our community. So keep your eyes peeled for a new "voice" in our congregation!

Committee News- Cont'd.

Community Worship Service **December 29th at 11am**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
401 Church Street

The pastors or representatives of the Hawley United Methodist Church, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, and the First Presbyterian Church meet each month to support each other's ministry and find ways to do ministry together.

Our next ecumenical event will take place on **Sunday, December 29th**. On that day, the Methodists and Presbyterians will join St. Paul's Lutheran Church for worship at 11am. The service will be a series of readings, music, and sharing in the Lord's Supper. What a great way to begin the New Year.

- **Location** – St. Paul's Lutheran Church is on the corner of Maple Street and Church Street.
- **Parking** - for the service is in the lot behind the Hawley Hub, on the street, or at the Methodist Church.
- **Accessibility** – There is an elevator inside the door which is closest to Maple Street and Church Street. An attendant will help with the elevator. For everyone else, the sanctuary is on the second floor.

*There will be **No Worship Service** at First Presbyterian Church of Hawley on December 29th.*

Mission Committee **Head Start Volunteer Opportunities!** **Christmas Party** **December 17th at 9:30am**

- **Weekly Guests** - up to 30 minutes of reading, music, crafts, and more.
- **Fudge Day** - up to 3 volunteers, usually on the 4th Friday of the month.

First time volunteers, please see **Cathy Lee** for more information. You can also ask to shadow another volunteer, if you are unsure. All volunteers need to have your child clearances within the last 5 years. Please make sure we have a copy in the church office and also a copy for Head Start.



A Service of

Lessons & Carols

December 29, 2024, at 11 AM

at St Paul Lutheran Church

401 Church St, Hawley,
PA 18428

In combination with Hawley
& Lakeville United Methodist
& First Presbyterian Church.

Committee News- Cont'd.

Poinsettia Orders



If you would like to help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas we will be taking orders starting **Sunday, November 17th - Sunday, December 15th**. See order form in Sunday's Bulletins. This year we are offering 2 sizes - **8" Poinsettia Plant @ \$19.00 or 6" Poinsettia Plant @ \$8.00 each**. Both will be available in Red or White.

Year End Reports

You probably don't want to add another item to your seasonal task list, but we need your yearend reports. If you are leading a committee, group, or ministry, a report for the congregational meeting is requested. This is your opportunity to share with the congregation what you have accomplished in 2024. It is also a time when you can make your needs known for the coming year. The Reports need to be submitted by **Wednesday, December 18th**.

UPCOMING EVENTS



**Saturday, December 14th
9:00am to 12:30pm!!**

We have a great line up of bakers and lots of cookies to sell for \$10 per pound along with specialty items that are sold for \$5 a bag! You can't beat the prices. Please spread the word to family and friends. And please consider volunteering the day of the event. It is very busy, a lot of fun and a great way to get to know other members. **Contact Karen Lutz (917) 612-8824 or Kika Dyson (570) 498-0007.**

The Wallenpaupack High School Chamber Chorus will be giving a special concert during Winterfest on December 14th at 1:30pm in the Sanctuary at First Presbyterian Church. Traditional carols, Secular pieces and Hanukkah songs will be performed by this very talented student ensemble! Come and join us!

**Black Bear Conservatory
December 8th**

Students from Black Bear Conservatory will be giving a recital at First Presbyterian Church (Hawley) on Sunday, December 8th, at 3pm. All are welcome! Come out and support our local student musicians!

**Annual Christmas Dinner
Save The Date**

**December 10, 2024
at 6:00pm**

This year's Christmas Dinner will be **Tuesday, December 10th at 6pm, Pot-Luck style**. If you would like to contribute a dish to our Christmas dinner please see the Sign-Up sheet located on the table at the Narthex. For additional information, please contact **Pat Bartleson**.



**Reception of New Members
December 8, 2024**

We are delighted to welcome into the membership of our church **Greg and Herb Laird, Phil Dux, John & Rachel Wasczak, Sue Goldback, Dave & Kathy Smith, Jody Kouh & Pat Buck, Joe & Jane Jauss and Robert & Trudy Bogertman**. Please extend the right hand of fellowship to these talented and gracious siblings in Christ Jesus.

Upcoming Events - Cont'd.



Due December 8th

The Angel Tree will be available beginning **November 17th**. We will have Ornament tags from the Hawley Head Start & Pike Country Children and Youth Services. Anyone interested in participating can select an ornament tag containing the child's age, clothing size, and toy preference and *write your name next to the tag number on the Sign-up sheet*. Angel tree gifts are to be returned unwrapped in a gift bag with the ornament tag attached. All gifts must be returned on or before **December 8th**. Any cash donations received will be used to purchase gift cards for older children/teens. If there any questions, please see **Michelle Westbrook**.



FPCH Red Cross Blood Drive **December 16, 2024**

FPCH is sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive on **Monday, December 16, 2024** from **1pm-6pm**. Register to give blood at <https://www.redcross.org/>. To sign up for an appointment call **1-800-Red-Cross** or **Red Cross Blood.org** or Download the Blood Donor App.

Arcadia
CHORALE
Matthew Rupcich, Music Director

Love's Light Abounds:
A Holiday Celebration in Song

Enjoy an afternoon of song, weaving together the rich traditions of both Christian and Jewish holiday music, illuminating the universal themes of love, light, and togetherness.

Saturday, December 7, 2024 at 3:00 pm
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wilkes-Barre

Sunday, December 8, 2024 at 3:00 pm
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Scranton

Tickets
Adults \$15 - Seniors \$12 - Students free

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Scan the QR code or
Call 570-871-0350 or
Visit www.arcadiachorale.org

Tri-State Chorale
Matthew Rupcich, Music Director
presents a
Free Holiday Concert

A Tradition of Carols

Come and get into the holiday spirit with this FREE concert that the whole family can enjoy. Sing along with beloved David Willcocks carols accompanied by piano, organ and 'Reflections' brass quintet.

Enjoy performances from the **Tri-State Chorale**, **DVHS Chamber Choir** and the **SES Chamber Choir**.

Thursday, December 19, 2024 - 7:00pm
Saint Patrick's Church - 111 E. High St., Milford, Pennsylvania

MILFORD PRESENTS

The Tri-State Chorale is a not-for-profit group of local singers for whom performance quality and vocal education are our top priority. We offer free concerts and sponsor student memberships that are funded by member dues, donations, program advertisements and grants from sponsors, including The Greater Pike Community Foundations Richard L. Snyder Fund.

GREATER PIKE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Upcoming Events - Cont'd.

Chancel Choir - New Section Leaders

As Music Director at First Presbyterian, it is with great joy and enthusiasm that I introduce to you, our church family, our new soprano and tenor section leaders. They are here to provide support for the chancel choir and to help continue building the music program at First Presbyterian. Please take a moment to read their biographies below to learn more about them!



Stephen Faubel began taking piano lessons and singing in church talent shows at age 4. He launched his musical career at age 10, singing with the St. Thomas Choir in NYC where he recorded with Judy Collins and performed with Jessye Norman, the Concert Royal and toured Italy, Austria and New England. In high school, Stephen studied piano at Marywood University and sang 1st chair at All-State Chorus in 1998 and 1999 and performed at Carnegie Hall for All Eastern Chorus. He continued his studies in piano and voice at Penn State with Dr. Norman Spivey and Dr. Steven Smith, eventually earning a BA in Music. During this time, Stephen toured Eastern Europe and the southern US with Dr. Anthony Leach's "Essence of Joy." In 2008-2009, he sang with The New York Choral Society at Carnegie Hall and with the Robert Dale/Arcadia Chorale in Scranton from 2010-2020. Stephen has held positions as Music Director/Accompanist at Bethany Presbyterian Church and Accompanist at Hawley United Methodist Church. Since 2009, Stephen has been involved with the Ritz Company Playhouse in Hawley, PA as the Music Director and/or accompanist and currently serves on the Board of Directors. Stephen has taught private music lessons for over 20 years. He is currently an instructor at Black Bear Conservatory of Music in Hawley and serves as the President of the Board of Directors. Stephen plays in a wide range of ensembles throughout Hawley and Northeast Pennsylvania, ranging from classical, jazz, rock, jam, reggae, folk and original music.



Lauren Piccotti was born and raised in Flemington, New Jersey. Her love of music began in Elementary school and progressed through Middle and High School as she became actively involved in multiple choirs including Regional and All-State choir, select ensembles, musicals, and color guard in the marching band. Lauren attended Marywood University in Scranton, receiving her B.A. in Music Administration, with a focus in Music and Business. She networked with a wide audience of musicians in college, where she was a member of the Marywood Chamber Singers as well as the Marywood Campus Choir. During her senior year, she became a member of the Robert Dale Chorale which transitioned to Arcadia Chorale and is still a member today. Along with Chorale, Lauren was a part of the inception of Voce Angeli, a women's choir based in Scranton and continues to sing with them in the summer. Lauren is also a vocal coach. She taught at the Scranton Music Academy in Scranton, PA for 12 years until she and her husband built their home and moved locally to Newfoundland. She teaches voice lessons out of her home. Until recently, Lauren sang as the Soprano in the quartet at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Scranton for 17 years. She is honored to join as the Soprano section leader here at First Presbyterian Church of Hawley!

CHURCH LIFE

Home Communion

Pastor Mark is giving Home Communion on the first Sunday of each month. **If you are homebound and would like to receive communion, please contact the church office the week before.** Communion will be received in the afternoon following worship.

January Newsletter

Articles for our **January** Newsletter need to be in the office by **Wednesday, December 18th.** **Electronic News** – If you would like to receive your Monthly Newsletters by E-Mail please contact the Church Office with your current E-Mail address. Thank you.

Fall Bible Studies Advent Bible Study

Our Bible Study groups will shift to an Advent Bible Study on **November 20th**. We will focus on the Gospel Mark and the Advent this writer proclaims. Interestingly, Mark does not write anything about the Birth Narrative as the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. However, the kingdom messages of Jesus greatly proclaim the new world Christ has brought into being. We will be using the book “Holy Disruption: Discovering Advent in the Gospel of Mark” by Tracy Daub. Holy Disruption presents a fresh understanding of the holiness of Christmas grounded, not in a conventional cozy Christmas message, but through Mark's disquieting gospel which invites its readers to experience God's disruptive but transformative love for us and our world.

Our Schedule is as follows:

- November 20th - The End of the World as we Know It.
- December 4th - Peace on Earth, Goodwill to All
- December 11th - Home for the Holidays
- December 18th - Hidden in Plain Sight
- January 8th - The Cradle, the Cross, and the Gift of Emmanuel

All are welcome to join in during this season of Advent.

Wednesday Evenings at 6:30pm or Thursday Mornings at 11:00am

*Bible Study will **be cancelled November 27th, December 25th & 26th and January 1st & 2nd** due to the upcoming holidays.*

Freezer Ministry

The church is **ACCEPTING** food for the Freezer Ministry. Thank you to all who have recently contributed to the Freezer Ministry. The church is accepting more frozen dinners at this time. We could use some more non-perishable items, too! If you would like to donate and or have any questions, please feel free to drop them off at the Church office.

Monday Small Group Study

The Small Study Group meets Monday's at 11:00am at the home of Betsy Yergey, 27 Lake Drive, Hawley. For a curriculum see the Study Sheet from the previous Sunday sermon. All are welcome. Small Study group will be **cancelled on December 23rd and December 30th** due to the upcoming holiday.

Church Life – Cont’d.

Good News Café

The Good News Café will be *cancelled on December 14th, due to Cookie Walk, and December 28th* due to the upcoming holidays. The Café will resume on *January 11, 2025*. A seated lunch meal is provided. The Café is open on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month from *11:30am–1:00 PM*. Please direct questions concerning signing up to cook a meal or helping to serve to Eileen Brewington, Pat Gemeinhardt or Karen Rockafellow. Your help and support are much appreciated.

FPCH Office Hours

Monday – Friday 9:00am - 1:00pm

The office will be closed *Wednesday, December 25th thru December 31st* in observance of the Christmas holiday and again on *Wednesday, January 1st* in observance of New Year’s Day. The Office will reopen on *Thursday, January 2, 2025* from 9:00am-1:00pm.



2025 Book Club Selections

Members of the First Presbyterian Book Club have selected books for January through June 2025. They range in a variety of subjects from mystery, immigration, the arts to books themselves.

The books chosen are as follows:

- (January 17th) The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
- (February 21st), God of the Woods by Liz Moore
- (March 21st), Solito by Javier Zamora
- (April 18th), Code Name: Lise by Larry Loftus
- (May 16th) The Glass Castle by Jeanette Wells and,
- (June 20th) The Keeper of Hidden Books by Madeline Martin

Meetings are always held on the *third Friday* of the month at *1pm* in the Jackie Wolf Wing.

If you have any questions, see **Melanie Tek-Visgilio**. All are welcome at the meetings.

Donate to FPCH

Please continue to give your offerings for our church. You may use the free website portal on the church’s website:

(<https://www.fpchawley.org>)

or feel free to send a check directly to the church at *815 Church Street, Hawley, PA*. Your support is greatly appreciated.

The books will be closed December 31, 2024

Books

There is a bookcase full of books in the Social Hall. Please feel free to take them home.

Volunteers Needed

If you would like to volunteer, please sign up in the vestibule to be an **Usher and to host Coffee Hour**. For Liturgists, see **Adele Harrison**, and to help with Communion, see **Ann Marie Grilk**.

Church Life - Cont'd.



12/2 – Nancy Vignau
12/5 – Kenneth Smith
12/6 – Kenneth Burton
12/8 – Rev. Mark Juengel
12/10 – Stan Bartleson
12/12 – Leslie Rugen
12/20 – Dave Smith
12/22 – Michelle Westbrook
12/26 – Ruth Thomas
12/28 - Rod Warner



12/20 – Linda & Ron Kraft and
Albert “Chip” & Barbara Schariest

12/29 – Rev. Mark & Jill Juengel

Joys & Concerns

For a most recent Prayer List, please go to the Church’s website at: <https://www.fpchawley.org/>

Liturgist for December

12/1: Ann Marie Grilk
12/8: Tom Visgilio
12/15: John Ehlers
12/22: Nancy Vignau
12/24: TBD - (Christmas Eve)
12/29: Jim Mould & Patrick Field
*Community Worship Service
St. Paul’s Lutheran Church*

Ushers for December

12/1: Tom & Melanie Visgilio
12/8: Pat Schmidt
12/15: Jim & Eileen Brewington
12/22: Cliff & Beth Crowley
12/24: TBD - (Christmas Eve)
12/29: *N/A - Community Worship Service
at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church*

Good News Café Cook for December

The Café will be *cancelled
December 14th* due to
Cookie Walk and *December
28th* due to the Holiday
season. The Café will resume
on *January 11, 2025.*

Coffee Hour for December

12/1: Parish Life
12/8: TBD
12/15: Kathy Smith
12/22: Rev. Mark & Jill Juengel
(*40th Wedding Anniversary*)
12/29: *N/A - Community
Worship Service
at St. Paul’s
Lutheran Church*

Communion Servers

December Communion (December 1st)

Set Up & Clean Up: Jill Juengel
Servers: Jill Juengel, Carol Cowan,
Pat Bartleson, Beth Crowley
& Kathy Smith

January Communion (January 5th)

Set Up & Clean Up: Don MacArthur
Servers: Don MacArthur, Maria MacArthur,
Pat Gemeinhardt, Kathy Smith &
Karen Rockafellow

December Sunday Flower Donations

12/1: TBD
12/8: TBD
12/15: Steve & Lorraine
Bartleson in memory of
Izzy Bartleson
12/22: TBD
12/23: (Christmas Eve)
12/29: *Community Worship
Service at St. Paul’s
Lutheran Church*

COMMUNITY EVENTS



The Lion's Club will be meeting on **Thursday, December 19th** at 5:30pm



For those in need of support the church is hosting **AA & NA** meetings as follows:

**AA – Every Monday and Wednesdays
at 12:00pm**

NA – Every Tuesday at 8:00pm



The Wayne Highlands Quilt Guild usually meets the third Monday of the month, here at First Presbyterian Church. Our next meeting will be on **Monday, December 9th**. **We have an open sew at 2:00pm before our meeting at 4pm-6pm.** We take part in a variety of projects: charity sewing, wall hanging challenges, block of the month, mystery quilts, bi-annual quilt camp, and more. At each meeting there is a program, show and tell and technique builders. For more information call Deb at 908-358-2670 or email her at: debszoo@gmail.com.



Joy to the world

MERRY
Christmas
HAPPY NEW YEAR