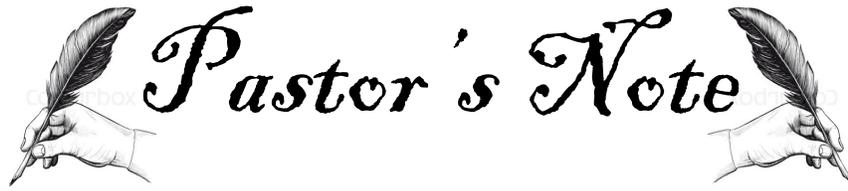


The Evangel



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DECEMBER 2014



Pastor's Note

From the Pastor: *Born to Give Us Second Birth*

The season of Advent is finally here, which means that we can all stop arguing as to whether Christmas music should be on the radio before Thanksgiving. Now, instead, we can all start arguing as to which Christmas song is the best.¹ Well, let me settle the argument once-and-for-all: the very best Christmas song is Charles Wesley's "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!"

*Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

*Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

*Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

Have you ever read such rich, powerful words?² With these simple verses, Wesley has captured the meaning of this season – that God has come down to us, *veiled in flesh, an incarnate Deity*. God, in Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, became a human being – and that's amazing news! It's so amazing, that the angels themselves exploded in praise, in a *triumph of the skies*. And now, *with the angelic hosts*, we must proclaim *Christ is born in Bethlehem*. With the angelic hosts, we are called to be *heralds*.³ In fact, *all nations* are called to *rise and join this triumph*, for *Jesus, our Emmanuel, is pleased as man with men to dwell!* Hallelujah!

Folks, what other god would ever do this? What other god could ever bring *light and life* to all? What other god is the *Sun of righteousness*, or has such *healing in his wings* (Malachi 4:2)? What other god would ever *lay his glory by*, all so that we *may never die* – that we *might have second birth*? Only our God has ever done this, folks. Only our God has ever done something so audacious, so humbling, so beautiful!

¹While we may argue as to which Christmas song is best, it's pretty obvious which are the worst – it's a tie between New Song's wretchedly sappy "The Christmas Shoes" and John Denver's terribly depressing "Please, Daddy, Don't Get Drunk This Christmas!"

²Wesley's original words were *Hark, how all the welkin rings, "Glory to the newborn King!"*. ("Welkin" is an archaic word that means the sky or heavens). Evangelist George Whitefield substituted "herald angels" for "welkin", a change Wesley did not like, since the Scriptures never mention the angels actually singing, but rather simply speaking. For more, see Ace Collins, *Stories Behind the Best-Loved Songs of Christmas*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

³Contrary to popular belief, there is no angel in the Bible named "Harold".

And by doing this, by becoming a newborn king, and by living and dying and living again for us, He has healed our human race of its sin-sickness. He has enabled us to be born again in Him.

So how could we not hearken unto the angelic chorus? How could we not join the triumph of the skies that those simple shepherds were so blessed to witness? How could we not, with those angelic host, proclaim that Jesus Christ – that God Himself – has been born to us in Bethlehem? This is such amazing news of great joy! Hallelujah! Glory to God in the highest!

So as we again prepare to celebrate these incredible things, and as we sing all kinds of Christmas songs (both great and terrible!⁴), let us be mindful of the good news of great joy that has been given to us and to all people: that unto us has been born a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord! To Him alone be the glory!

In Christ's Love,
Joshua

⁴Just don't sing "Santa, Baby" around me. Or "Dominic, the Italian Christmas Donkey". Or "Wonderful Christmastime". Or "The Little Drummer Boy". Or "Happy Christmas (War is Over)". I can't stand those.



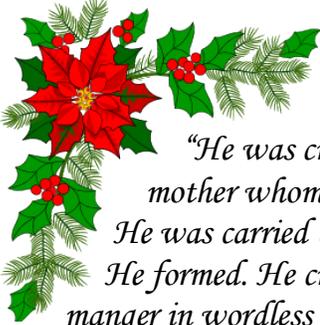
Christmas Eve Communion and Candlelight Service will be held Wednesday, December 24 at 11pm. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated, and the traditional candle lighting service will be observed. All are welcome!



On December 2, there will be a joint meeting of Deacons and Session in the YC Room. Appetizers will be served at 6:00pm with the meeting starting at 7:00. All new and current Deacons and Elders are welcome to attend.



Pastor Long will be on vacation from December 25 to January 1. If you have any pastoral care needs during this time, please call the church office. Be sure to join us in worship on Sunday, December 28 as we enjoy an old-fashioned hymn sing!



Quote to Ponder...
"He was created of a mother whom He created. He was carried by hands that He formed. He cried in the manger in wordless infancy – He, the Word – without whom all human eloquence is mute!"
~ Augustine of Hippo

2¢ A MEAL, DECEMBER 14.

You can place your donations in the gold pots located at both entrances to the sanctuary. Thanks for your donation to feed the hungry.



PRAYER MEETING

Our next monthly prayer meeting is Saturday,

December 13, 11am in the chapel. Please join us as we lift up our congregation, our leaders, our nation, and other needs in prayer! All are welcome!



Quote to Ponder

"Rejoice, that the immortal God is born, so that mortal man may live in eternity" ~ John Hus

If you have an article or event you would like featured in the **January Evangel**, please submit them to Kristy by **December 17**. You can leave a note in her mailbox or email her at kkathman@harrisonpresbyterian.com

There will be a **HEALING SERVICE** in the chapel after the 10:45 service on **December 28**. All who wish to receive anointing, the laying on of hands and prayers for healing are welcome.



Our **Annual Christmas Program** with the Sunday School children will take place on December 14, at 6:30pm. This is a big night for the children, so we hope you will support them by attending. There will be refreshments after the program, and if we are good, we might get a visit with Santa. If you

are able to provide some Christmas cookies, please let me know. Hope to see you there!

~ Phyllis Wolf



The Mission Committee is again sponsoring the annual **Giving Tree**. The tree will be located in Faith Hall during Advent. The gifts we collect will be given to local elementary school children in need. Please consider giving socks, underwear, sweat shirts and pants. Thank you for your willingness to help the children stay warm and comfortable this winter season.

Snow Removal Help Needed

Please help us make sure the church building is safe to enter and exit. The Facilities committee is asking for people to help remove snow and ice and spread salt in the parking lot and walkways around the building. We will have the shovels and salt in an accessible location. This is not just for Sunday mornings but for other activities during the week. Sign-up sheets are located on the cork board near the office and in Faith Hall.

YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group News: Youth Connection is a group of 7 - 12 grade teens who meet the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month from 6:00pm to 8:00pm in the Youth Room. Please watch bulletins, Facebook and text messages for the latest information about YC events.

Upcoming Youth Connection Activities:

- Sunday, Nov. 30, 6 - 8pm - meeting
- Sunday, Dec. 7, 12 - 5pm - visit shut-ins
- Sunday, Dec. 14, 6 - 8pm - participate in the church Christmas Program
- Sunday, Dec. 21, 12 - 5pm - visit shut-ins
- Saturday, Jan. 3, 8 am - 3 pm - volunteer at Matthew 25 Ministries



for Christmas!

The church office will be closed Christmas Day & New Years Day.

On behalf of the office staff, we wish you all safe travels and a blessed holiday!



Christmas Party



The Women's Association Christmas party will take place on Thursday, December 4 at the home of June Merten. We will start with punch at 11:30 with lunch following at 12:00.

Please bring a non-perishable food item and a wrapped toy (marked with age and gender) for the Mayor's Fund. Please also bring a nice wrapped gift to be auctioned off during the party.

All women of the church are invited to come and enjoy the good food, fellowship and fun.

Your December hostess will be June Merten, Marilyn Rueger, Shirley Fury and Carol Barnes.

The Harrison VOCE Community Chorus will be presenting a mini-concert at our church on Sunday, December 7 at 2:30pm. This is a gift to the community. They are trying to let people see what they are all about. Their big Christmas concert will be on Saturday, December 13 at 7:00pm. at the Harrison High School Activity Center. Please plan to come to our two concerts and get in the Christmas spirit!



Our own Beth Snape and Marilyn Bourquein are part of this group. If you have any questions, see Phyllis Wolf.

- 1 Timothy Bybee
- 3 Rebekah Hobson Becker
- 5 Kent Meyers

DECEMBER BIRTHDAY BAKERS:

Marcia Merse, Pat Scheer, Mindy Sindiong



- 6 Debra Frenz
- 9 Brian Corcoran,
Brooklyn Wurzelbacher
- 11 Deanna Jones, Kara Thiele
- 12 Hazel Sheer
- 13 Janna Corcoran
- 18 Mary Ellen Watts
- 19 Alan Wolfram
- 20 Luke Rivera
- 25 Jeff Sindiong
- 26 Brian Thomas, Jim Koehler

Stewardship Note ~ 2015 Pledges

Your pledge makes a critical difference in our operations next year. If you have not already done so, it is not too late to turn in your 2015 pledge card. Also, if you feel led to increase your pledge, please turn in a revised pledge card to the church office. For confidentiality purposes, please seal your pledge in an envelope.



Our congregation is dedicated worshiping God and teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our families, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. We are striving to preserve God's word for our future heirs and descendants. Each of us helps to further God's will when we prayerfully support the budget. Our congregation has always been faithful in its giving and we will continue in faith.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of the Stewardship committee members with questions or to discuss your pledge: Sandra McCauley, Erwin Hein, Fred Burkey, Belinda Moul (Treasurer), Brian Thomas and Jeff Gibbs (Financial Secretary).



Look for Worship and Sunday School cancellations and delays at the following TV channels & websites. You can also check the Church's Facebook page for updates.

- WCPO – Channel 9 www.wcpo.com/closingsadmin
- WKRC – Channel 12 www.schoolwatch.com
- WXIX – Channel 19 www.fox19.com

Time to Order Your Christmas Poinsettias

Please fill out the form below if you would like to purchase a poinsettia to be placed in the Sanctuary for the Christmas Eve service.

All orders and money are due to the church office by December 16.

Each flower will cost \$9.50 each.

(The church does not make a profit from the sale of these flowers. Checks payable to First Presbyterian.)

All flowers can be taken home after the Christmas Eve service.

of flowers @ \$9.50 ea. _____

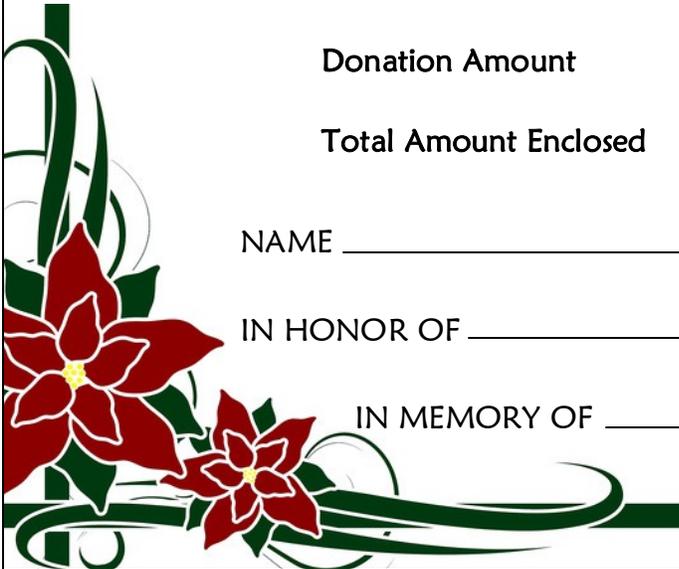
Donation Amount \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

NAME _____

IN HONOR OF _____

IN MEMORY OF _____



The Deacon's Fund (Pink Envelopes located in the pews) is a fund used towards their Mission:
1) To show we care about the needs of our church family and to reflect the love and provisions of our Lord. 2) To provide financial aid to those in time of need as recognized primarily through Cluster contacts.

The Deacon's Fund Method: 1) The congregation will have the opportunity to share their wealth to those in need on Communion Sundays via the pink envelopes in the Sanctuary/bulletins. 2) A committee (the Parish Assistant, the Deacon Chairperson and a Deacon) will comprise the Fund Management Team to oversee the funds and make disbursements. 3) This Deacon Fund will be separate from the regular Deacon budget.

Please look for the pink envelopes this December and participate as you can. The Deacons thank you.



Christmas Myths

The Twelve Myths of Christmas

A number of details have slipped into popular conceptions of the Christmas story that aren't actually in the Bible. The following are all either details that have been added to the Christmas story, or which are actually incorrect. The story of Jesus' birth is found in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2, if you want to check any of these out!

- Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem. *(Actually, we're told nothing of how Joseph and Mary travelled to Bethlehem. They may have simply walked.)*
- An innkeeper refused Mary and Joseph entry into his inn. *(We're only told that "there was no room at the inn" – no innkeeper appears in Scripture.)*
- Mary gave birth to Jesus the very night they reached Bethlehem. *(Scripture does not give any such timetable.)*
- Jesus was born in a stable or a cave. *(This detail is not given. We know only that He was laid in a manger.)*
- Jesus was born in December. *(Scripture gives no date for Jesus' birth.)*
- Jesus was surrounded by animals at His birth. *(Scripture mentions no such animals, though usually with a manger, there are animals.)*
- The Baby Jesus didn't cry. *(This myth arose from a supposition that Jesus, being sinless, would never cry or soil His diaper. Again, Scripture says nothing about this. Jesus was a fully human baby, though, so it's pretty safe to assume that He did both.)*
- The angels sang when they appeared to the shepherds. *(Scripture tells us that the angels said "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to those with whom He is well-pleased.")*
- The angels told the shepherds to follow the star. *(The star was a sign for the wise men, not for the shepherds.)*
- The wise men were kings (there were three of them), and they traveled by camel. *(The wise men, or Magi, were certainly not kings, but rather more like court astrologers/scientists, probably in Persia. There were three gifts given, but we are not told how many wise men giving them, nor are we told how they traveled to Bethlehem as they followed the star.)*
- The wise men visited Jesus at the stable. *Scripture tells us that they came to the house where Mary, Joseph and Jesus were.)*
- Herod's edict to slaughter male infants was to be enforced nationwide. *Herod's edict was for boy babies "in and around Bethlehem". Still, it must have caused great grief!*

Adapted from T.J. McTavish, *A Biblical Miscellany*. (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2005), 91.

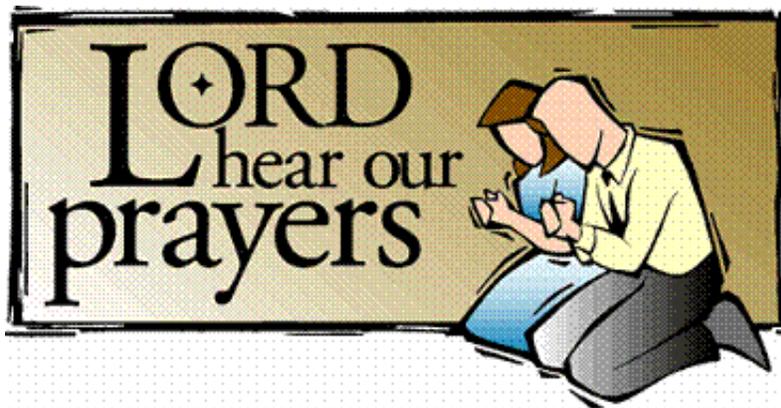
Pastor's Bible Study Continues! Have you always wanted to learn more about the Bible? Do you want to learn how better to read and understand the Scriptures? Come join the Pastor's Bible Study! We meet every Monday at 7pm in the Conference Room. This year, we're studying 1-2 Kings. All are welcome

THERE WILL BE NO BIBLE STUDY DEC. 22nd or DEC. 29th.

**THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR
OUR CHURCH FAMILY**

For Health Needs

Jo Jean Kleinfeld
Gene Steelman
Louanna Smith
Bennie Pierson
Hester Konkle
Janet Coakley
Russell Taylor
Ellen Puckett
Elaine Harris
Nomi Taylor
Jane Poland
Earl Dwelly
Pam Kraus
Diane Arel
Jean Vest
Bill Bates



Our Shut-Ins

Pauline Zimmerman
Nora Montgomery
Theresa Johnson
Jeanette Rae
Ginny Thiele
Gloria Culley
Don Kraus

Specific Prayer Needs

Deb Menninger: for her son's health;
June Merten: for her brother's health;
Stephanie Trabel: for her aunt's health;
Linda Hellmann: for her sister's health needs;
Deana Doepker: for her mother-in-law's health;
Georgia & Earl Dwelly: for their daughters' health;
Taaron Meyers: for her cousin, Lauren Hill's health;
Lana Bybee: for her niece & family - for the health of their new triplets;
Ted & Janet Coakley: for their granddaughter's, her sister's & his brother's health

PRAYER CHAIN CALLS FOR 2014

*The Prayer Chain is a group of people who are committed to praying daily for those requesting prayer. This ministry is administered through our Board of Deacons. If you have a prayer request please contact **Marcia Merse at 812-637-3702 (home) or 367-4301 (work) during the day** or **Phyllis Wolfram at 367-4578 during the evening**. For two weeks, the people on the chain will pray daily for the person or situation requested.*



I just placed a book in our church library with call number 780 by Kenneth Osbeck titled "History of 25 of Our Hymns". It's the only 780 book we own. I think real music lovers will enjoy knowing the beginnings of some of these hymns. ~ Ellen Puckett

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Harrison, OH 45030
Pastor: Joshua Long
Church Phone number: 367-4301
Church email: kkathman@harrisonpresbyterian.com
Pastor email: jlong@harrisonpresbyterian.com
Website: www.HarrisonPresbyterian.com

OUR CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

First Presbyterian Church of Harrison, Ohio is growing in faith by building stronger relationships with God and community through prayer and worship. The reading and understanding of God's Word strengthens our commitment to share the Good News of Jesus Christ through love and service to our neighbor so that all may experience God's grace.

