

Calendar of up-coming events for the remainder of this year:

- Sun., Nov. 29 Lights of Love & Christmas Concert 5:00 p.m.
First Sunday of Advent
- Sun., Dec. 6 Session meeting after worship
- Tues., Dec. 8 Presbyterian Women meeting 10:00 a.m.
- Thurs., Dec. 10 Prayer, Study & Fellowship Meeting 5:30 p.m.
- Sun., Dec. 13 Church Christmas dinner following worship
- Sun., Dec. 20 Children's Christmas pageant during worship
- Mon., Dec. 21 Winter begins
- Thurs., Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00 p.m.
Communion will be served

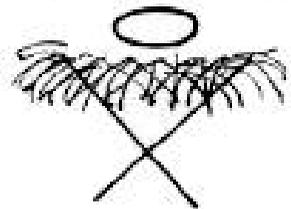
Prayer, Study and Fellowship meetings

Thursday, December 10
5:30 — 8:00 p.m.
in the fellowship hall

Everyone is welcome

A simple meal, bible study, prayer and lots of discussion about real-life events and concerns facing each of us today and how the Bible helps us deal with these issues. Hope to see you there.

*Love was born on
Christmas morn.*



Prayer Requests

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| Laurie Groves and family | Francy Becker |
| Tom's father, Dick Forbes | Mary Brandlen |
| Alison's mother, Isabel Fain | Theresa Wolford |
| Ginny Flick | Nina McCarty |
| Lawrence Cook | Paula Swayne |
| Floretta Kelly | LauraNell Hil |
| Lauren Cook | Artie Hartman |
| Gloria Harrell-Cook | PPC ministry |
| George Tasker | Luke Mertz |
| Virginia Metcalf | John Michael Hartman |
| Jack & Tess Tasker | Christopher Hartman |
| Our country and our troops | Bryan Hartman |
| People who are caregivers to family members | Missionaries in Belize |
| Orphans of Belize | Jim Wilson |
| Glynn & Shawn Harbaugh | |
| Ernie and Carol Kelly | |

Thank You

for your service to your church during the month of December:

Ushers and Greeters

- Dec. 6 Francy Becker & Maxine Groves
- Dec. 13 Buck Knotts & Lawrence Cook
- Dec. 20 Jack Brandlen & Andi Grady
- Dec. 24 Debbie & Steve Scheermesser
- Dec. 27 Cindy & Ed Scheermesser

Counters

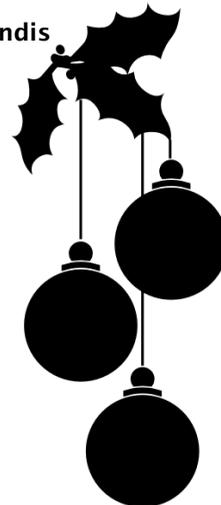
- Dec. 6 Sandra Chilcote & Erma Landis
- Dec. 13 Erma Landis & Andi Grady
- Dec. 20 Denise & Darlene Spitzer
- Dec. 27 Debbie & Mike Hartman

Liturgists

- Dec. 6 Jeanne Thrasher
- Dec. 13 Lori Evans
- Dec. 20 Francy Becker
- Dec. 24 Jeanne Thrasher
- Dec. 27 Jeanne Thrasher

Communion Servers

- Dec. 24 Kathy Boyce
- Mike Boyce
- Debbie Scheermesser
- Steve Scheermesser



- December 3 Kevin Bowman
- December 4 Andi Grady
- December 4 Cindy Butler
- December 20 Kaylee Bowman
- December 21 Debbie Hartman

Happy Birthday Jesus!

WHAT CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT



And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them...And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

LUKE 2:9-11



Pa never had much compassion for the lazy or those who squandered their means and then never had enough for the necessities. But for those who were genuinely in need, his heart was as big as all outdoors. It was from him that I learned the greatest joy in life comes from giving, not from receiving.

It was Christmas Eve 1881. I was fifteen years old and feeling like the world had caved in on me because there just hadn't been enough money to buy me the rifle that I'd wanted for Christmas. We did the chores early that night for some reason. I just figured Pa wanted a little extra time so we could read in the Bible.

After supper was over I took my boots off and stretched out in front of the fireplace and waited for Pa to get down the old Bible. I was still feeling sorry for myself and, to be honest, I wasn't in much of a mood to read Scriptures. But Pa didn't get the Bible, instead he bundled up again and went outside. I couldn't figure it out because we had already done all the chores. I didn't worry about it long though, I was too busy wallowing in self-pity.

Soon, Pa came back in. It was a cold, clear, night out and there was ice in his beard. "Come on, Matt," he said. "Bundle up good, it's cold out tonight." I was really upset then. Not only wasn't I getting the rifle for Christmas, now Pa was dragging me out in the cold, and for no earthly reason that I could see. We'd already done all the chores, and I couldn't think of anything else that needed doing, especially not on a night like this. But I knew Pa was not very patient at one dragging one's feet when he'd told them to do something, so I got up and put my boots back on and got my cap, coat, and mittens. Ma gave me a mysterious smile as I opened the door to leave the house. Something was up, but I didn't know what...

Outside, I became even more dismayed. There in front of the house was the work team, already hitched to the big sled. Whatever it was, we were going to do wasn't going to be a short, quick, little job. I could tell. We never hitched up this sled unless we were going to haul a big load. Pa was already up on the seat, reins in hand. I reluctantly climbed up beside him. The cold was already biting at me. I wasn't happy. When I was on, Pa pulled the sled around the house and stopped in front of the woodshed. He got off and I followed. "I think we'll put on the high sideboards," he said. "Here, help me." The high sideboards! It had been a bigger job than I wanted to do with just the low sideboards on, but whatever it was we were going to do would be a lot bigger with the high side boards on. After we had exchanged the sideboards, Pa went into the woodshed and came out with an armload of wood - the wood I'd spent all summer hauling down from the mountain, and then all Fall sawing into blocks and splitting. What was he doing?

Finally I said something. "Pa," I asked, "what are you doing?" "You been by the Widow Jensen's lately?" he asked. The Widow Jensen lived about two miles down the road. Her husband had died a year or so before and left her with three children, the oldest being eight. Sure, I'd been by, but so what? "Yeah," I said, "Why?" "I rode by just today," Pa said. "Little Jakey was out digging around in the woodpile trying to find a few chips. They're out of wood, Matt." That was all he said and then he turned and went back into the woodshed for another armload of wood. I followed

him. We loaded the sled so high that I began to wonder if the horses would be able to pull it. Finally, Pa called a halt to our loading, then we went to the smoke house and Pa took down a big ham and a side of bacon. He handed them to me and told me to put them in the sled and wait. When he returned he was carrying a sack of flour over his right shoulder and a smaller sack of something in his left hand. "What's in the little sack?" I asked. Shoes, they're out of shoes. Little Jakey just had gunny sacks wrapped around his feet when he was out in the woodpile this morning. I got the children a little candy too. It just wouldn't be Christmas without a little candy."

We rode the two miles to Widow Jensen's pretty much in silence. I tried to think through what Pa was doing. We didn't have much by worldly standards. Of course, we did have a big woodpile, though most of what was left now was still in the form of logs that I would have to saw into blocks and split before we could use it. We also had meat and flour, so we could spare that, but I knew we didn't have any money, so why was Pa buying them shoes and candy? Really, why was he doing any of this? Widow Jensen had closer neighbors than us; it shouldn't have been our concern.

We came in from the blind side of the Jensen house and unloaded the wood as quietly as possible, then we took the meat and flour and shoes to the door. We knocked. The door opened a crack and a timid voice said, "Who is it?" "Lucas Miles, Ma'am, and my son, Matt, could we come in for a bit?" Widow Jensen opened the door and let us in. She had a blanket wrapped around her shoulders. The children were wrapped in another and were sitting in front of the fireplace by a very small fire that hardly gave off any heat at all. Widow Jensen fumbled with a match and finally lit the lamp.

"We brought you a few things, Ma'am," Pa said and set down the sack of flour. I put the meat on the table. Then Pa handed her the sack that had the shoes in it. She opened it hesitantly and took the shoes out one pair at a time. There was a pair for her and one for each of the children - sturdy shoes, the best, shoes that would last. I watched her carefully. She bit her lower lip to keep it from trembling and then tears filled her eyes and started running down her cheeks. She looked up at Pa like she wanted to say something, but it wouldn't come out. "We brought a load of wood too, Ma'am," Pa said. He turned to me and said, "Matt, go bring in enough to last awhile. Let's get that fire up to size and heat this place up." I wasn't the same person when I went back out to bring in the wood. I had a big lump in my throat and as much as I hate to admit it, there were tears in my eyes too. In my mind I kept seeing those three kids huddled around the fireplace and their mother standing there with tears running down her cheeks with so much gratitude in her heart that she couldn't speak.

My heart swelled within me and a joy that I'd never known before, filled my soul. I had given at Christmas many times before, but never when it had made so much difference. I could see we were literally saving the lives of these people. I soon had the fire blazing and everyone's spirits soared. The kids started giggling when Pa handed them each a piece of candy and Widow Jensen looked on with a smile that probably hadn't crossed her face for a long time. She finally turned to us. "God Bless You," she said. "I know the Lord has sent you. The children and

I have been praying that He would send one of His Angels to spare us." In spite of myself, the lump returned to my throat and the tears welled up in my eyes again. I'd never thought of Pa in those exact terms before, but after Widow Jensen mentioned it I could see that it was probably true. I was sure that a better man than Pa had never walked the earth. I started remembering all the times he had gone out of his way for Ma and me, and many others. The list seemed endless as I thought on it.

Pa insisted that everyone try on the shoes before we left. I was amazed when they all fit and I wondered how he had known what sizes to get. Then I guessed that if he was on an errand for the Lord that the Lord would make sure he got the right sizes. Tears were running down Widow Jensen's face again when we stood up to leave. Pa took each of the kids in his big arms and gave them a hug. They clung to him and didn't want us to go. I could see that they missed their Pa, and I was glad that I still had mine.

At the door Pa turned to Widow Jensen and said, "The Mrs. wanted me to invite you and the children over for Christmas dinner tomorrow. The turkey will be more than the three of us can eat, and a man can get cantankerous if he has to eat turkey for too many meals. We'll be by to get you about eleven. It'll be nice to have some little ones around again. Matt, here, hasn't been little for quite a spell." I was the youngest. My two brothers and two sisters had all married and had moved away. Widow Jensen nodded and said, "Thank you, Brother Miles. I don't have to say, May The Lord Bless You, I know for certain that He will."

Out on the sled I felt a warmth that came from deep within and I didn't even notice the cold. When we had gone a ways, Pa turned to me and said, "Matt, I want you to know something. Your Ma and me have been tucking a little money away here and there all year so we could buy that rifle for you, but we didn't have quite enough. Then yesterday a man who owed me a little money from years back came by to make things square. Your Ma and me were real excited, thinking that now we could get you that rifle, and I started into town this morning to do just that, but on the way I saw little Jakey out scratching in the woodpile with his feet wrapped in those gunny sacks and I knew what I had to do. Son, I spent the money for shoes and a little candy for those children. I hope you understand."

I understood, and my eyes became wet with tears again. I understood very well, and I was so glad Pa had done it. Now the rifle seemed very low on my list of priorities. Pa had given me a lot more. He had given me the look on Widow Jensen's face and the radiant smiles of her three children. For the rest of my life, whenever I saw any of the Jensens, or split a block of wood, I remembered, and remembering brought back that same joy I felt riding home beside Pa that night. Pa had given me much more than a rifle that night, he had given me the best Christmas of my life.

the *Gift* is in the giving

The Lord be with you!

This is the Advent season. A new year is beginning! So, what is Advent? I'll tell you what it's not. It is not the shopping season leading up to Christmas. That starts at Thanksgiving now anyway. Advent is not about visions of sugar plums during long winter naps. It's not about decorated trees and houses. It's not about wish lists and Santa Clauses. In short Advent is not about getting ready for Christmas. Remind me in a few weeks to tell you what Christmas is not.

Originally, a long time ago, Advent was a time for being deeply sorry for the kind of mean, rotten, sinful people we are. It was a time of fasting as we prepared for the coming—the Advent—of our Judge. It was sort of the last chance to stack the deck in favor of our own salvation. But more recently, we've come to have a different view of what God is about in the world and Advent is now a time of hope and joy as we anticipate the fulfillment of God's kingdom on the earth. You see, what we've learned is that being Christian, being God's people, is not about us. It's not about our own personal salvation. It is about other people. It's about being part of God's mission in the world. It is about our neighbors. It is about the stranger—the other person—God puts in our path, and, it is about our enemies. Advent is about an expectation and a longing that Christ will come again and that our suffering, sinful world will be redeemed.

Christ has come and will come again. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end"(Rev. 22:13).

God's blessings be with you all, and with families and friends, in this season.

Tom



December Worship Services & Lectionary Readings—Year C

Sunday, Dec. 7	2nd Sunday of Advent
Malachi 3: 1—4 Philippians 1: 3—11	Luke 1: 68—79 Luke 3: 1—6
Sunday, Dec. 13	3rd Sunday of Advent
Zephaniah 3: 14—20 Philippians 4: 4—7	Isaiah 12: 2—6 Luke 3: 7—18
Sunday, Dec. 20	4th Sunday of Advent
Micah 5: 2—5 Hebrews 10: 5—10	Luke 1: 46—55 or Psalm 80: 1—7 Luke 1: 39—55
Sunday, Dec. 24	Christmas Eve
Isaiah 9: 2—7 Titus 2: 11-14	Psalm 96 Luke 2: 1--20
Sunday, Dec. 25	Nativity of the Lord/Christmas
Christmas Dawn:	
Isaiah 62: 6—12 Titus 3: 4—7	Psalm 97 Luke 2: 1—20
Christmas Day:	
Isaiah 52: 7—10 Hebrews 1: 1—12	Psalm 98 John 1: 1—14
Sunday, Dec. 27	1st Sunday after Christmas
1 Samuel 2: 18—20 , 26 Colossians 3: 12—17	Psalm 148 Luke 2: 41—52
Fri., Jan. 1, 2016	New Year's Day
Ecclesiastes 3: 1—13 Revelation 21: 1—6	Psalm 8 Matthew 25: 31—46
Sun., Jan. 3	2nd Sunday after Christmas
Jeremiah 31: 7—14 Ephesians 1: 3—14	Psalm 147: 12—20 John 1: 1—18

Merry Christmas



Youth Sunday School

Our youth use "Growing in Grace and Gratitude" from the Presbyterian Church. Each session is rooted in Bible stories that reveal God's grace.

Teachers are Jeanne Thrasher, Cindy Scheermesser and Francy Becker.

Adult Sunday School

The Adult Class uses the *We Believe* series. Sandra Chilcote is the Adult Teacher.

Winter Quarter 2015 Sacred Gifts and Holy Gatherings

Unit I: What We Bring to God

Dec. 6	The Lord's Day (Exodus 20: 8—11; 31: 12—16)
Dec. 13	Acceptable Offerings (Leviticus 22: 17—25, 31—33)
Dec. 20	Dedication of Firstborn (Exodus 13: 13—15; Luke 2: 22—32)
Dec. 27	A Generous Gift (Matthew 23: 2—12; Mark 12: 38—44)

Life and work of your church

Sunday	9:45 a.m. Sunday School 11:00 a.m. Worship service
Wednesday	6:30 p.m. Choir practice
2nd Thursday of each month (Nov. & Dec.)	"Bible Study" 5:30—8:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall
2nd Tuesday of each month	Presbyterian Women 10:00 a.m. meet in the fellowship hall
2nd Saturday of each month	Church Women of the Tri-Towns 12:00 noon meet in the fellowship hall
1st Sunday of each month	Food Pantry collection Sunday

I would like to take a poinsettia home with me

for
UNTO
us a
child
is BORN
Isaiah 9:6



*May the
Miracle of
Christmas
fill your heart
with joy*

THE GLEANER

Piedmont Presbyterian Church
63 Ashfield Street
PO Box 51
Piedmont, WV 26750
304-355-8614

E-Mail: piedmontpresby@frontier.com

Website: www.piedmontpresby.org

December 2015



2016 Pledge

**I/We pledge our support to
the work of Piedmont
Presbyterian Church for the
2016 church year in the
amount of**

\$ _____

Weekly Monthly Annually

(Please circle one)

Name

Address

**Please place in the offering plate on Sunday
mornings or mail to:**

**Piedmont Presbyterian Church
63 Ashfield Street
P.O. Box 51
Piedmont, WV 26750**