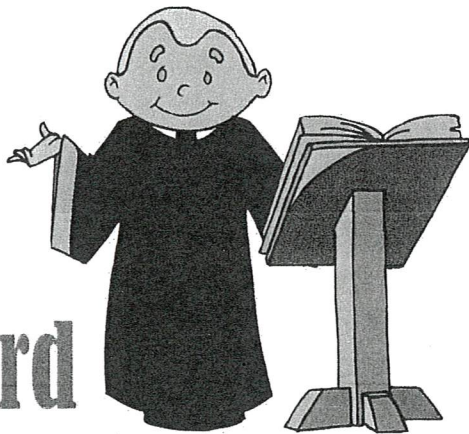


# Sandpiper

## December Worship Schedule

9:00am Sunday School  
Worship at 10:30am



## Word From the Pastor

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” Luke 1:34-35 NIV

Have you ever “collided” with Christ? You know what I mean. We all want Christmas cookie Jesus, but sometimes God does things we just don't expect...things that leave us scratching our heads., felling helpless or contradicting our other wise great intentions. Why does this happen?

Surprisingly, the Christmas story is filled with collisions. That's right. Sweet little baby Jesus put the world of his day into an uproar. What determined the difference between friend

and foe? Everything hinged upon how people responded to the good message of the Gospel that first Christmas.

Two thousand years later we're still facing the same question: will you respond with fear or faith to God's good news? It's a question my new series “Christmas Collisions” will help you explore for yourself. Join me and our friends at Middle Sandy every Sunday in December and have a Merry Christmas!

Pastor AJ

## Christmas Card List

There is a list of folks all written in a book,  
And every year at Christmas time I go and take  
a look.

This is when I realize that these names are a part  
Not of the book they're written in, but in my  
very heart.

For each name stands for someone who has touched  
my life sometime

And in that meeting they've become the "Rhythm  
of Rhyme."

I really feel I am composed of each  
remembered name,

And while you may not be aware of feeling quite  
the same,

My life is so much better than it was before  
you came.

For once that you have known someone the years  
cannot erase

The memory of a pleasant word or a friendly face.  
So never think my Christmas cards are just  
a mere routine

Of names upon a list forgotten in between.

For when I send a Christmas card that is  
addressed to you,

It is because you're on the list of folks I'm  
indebted to.

And whether I've known you for many years or few,  
In some way you have had a part in shaping  
things I do.

So every year when Christmas comes I realize anew  
The biggest gift that God can give is knowing folks  
like you!

(The Joyful Newsletter)

# Sands Through the Hourglass...

The sands in the December Hourglass beam brightly as they say:

"Knowing Jesus is the greatest gift  
that we can receive.

Sharing Him is the greatest gift  
that we can give."

Sharing with others is evident when we saw the many boxes taken and then filled by MS folks for the Samaritans Purse Christmas Child project. Years ago Billy Graham's son Franklin initiated the idea for others to reach out to youngsters who would probably not receive a gift for Christmas. We have participated in filling boxes for many years,

The PW sponsored Thank Offering worship service led by women of our congregation, was another time of sharing. Speakers from the Alliance Pregnancy Center told about the workings and the needs of the organization which assists women in the Alliance area. MS members responded by generously donating items and presenting a \$654 gift to help in their assisting those in need. Soup lunch followed the worship service.

Again, thanks for the donations by MS members toward the new Nativity scene that will enhance the front lawn of MS. It was a project of PW. Prayerfully, the joyful message of Jesus' birth will cause folks driving by to wonder about its meaning and wander into our sanctuary for fellowship, worship and learning the God's precious gift for all ...His Son Jesus.

PW will be providing poinsettias to beautify the sanctuary. Their serving of dinners, Knox Senior Citizens, Knox Lady Ruritans and the zone meeting for the Lions Club help to keep funds in their hoppers which they generously use to assist with different projects.

Recently I wandered into the Memorial Garden at the square in Homeworth to view the bricks purchased from the Homeworth Community group. Many have not yet been etched with names in honor or in memory of loved ones. If you would be interested in purchasing a brick for \$40.00 each, forms are available on the table beneath the message boxes near the office.

Christmas Eve has been celebrated for years and years at MS, a time for sharing music and scripture to observe Jesus' birth. The dedicated choir members, director Linda McQuilkin and accompanist B.J. Willis have been practicing for this year's service at 7 o'clock on Christmas Eve. I recall the many years that the service began at 11 o'clock. The sanctuary was filled with worshipers, some of whom were youngsters who fell asleep before the midnight hour. I especially recall a young fellow whose red head rested on his mother's lap as he snoozed. Today he needs to be alert for his job as an Alliance City fireman.

The bulletin board by the office will have space available for you to place a Christmas card greeting for your MS friends. With postage at \$.66. it will save you stamps. Oh, and in February 2024, the first class postage stamp will cost you \$.68 !

Christmas was first celebrated on December 25th in the year AD 336 during the reign of Emperor Constantine. A few years later, Pope Julius officially proclaimed that the birth of Jesus would every year be on the 25th of December.



# OUR PRAYER CONCERNS



We encourage you to send a card or letter to one or two each month. Addresses are available in the church directory or in the church office.

## **Continuing health needs:**

Staff Sgt. Ryan Lee (major orthopedic surgery October 11)  
Diane Sanor (auto immune disorder)  
Carter Schopfer (Joe & Susie's grandson)

## **Military Service:**

Brian Burbick (Navy Out in deployment till the end of January.)  
Garrett Floyd (A specialist in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne at Fort Bragg in NC)  
Staff Sgt. Ryan P. Lee (Ohio National Guard)  
SPC Joe Smythe (Ft. Bragg, NC)  
Jason Snyder (Ft. Bliss, El Paso, TX.) (Carole Mathey's grandson)  
Jon Pagnucco (Jane Stryffeler's grandson) – Navy (Alexandria, VA)

## **Our Missionaries - for Holy Spirit protection and great perseverance in their work.**

Jeff & Natasha Bain (EPC missionaries in Asia)  
Abe & Diane Bible (Missionaries to the Ukraine)  
Lisa Smith (at home)  
Paul & Reinhild Sydnor (ministry to refugees in Lille, France and Malta)

## **Article Deadline Note:**

Please turn in any articles or announcements for the Sandpiper to Carolyn Slingerland by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month. You can e-mail them to [middlesandy@frontier.com](mailto:middlesandy@frontier.com).

# December



## **Birthdays**

### **Name - Date**

Aaron John Tharp, Jr. – 3  
Susan Hume - 6  
Thomas Mason – 7  
Jim Wallace – 10  
Lynne Kidd – 11  
Wendy Weese - 18  
Jason Snyder – 19  
Joey Bush – 23  
Chelsea Tharp – 26  
Cindy Blenderbacher - 28

## **Anniversaries**

### **Couple – Date**

Tom & Monika Sawyer - 26

# Joy to the world, the Lord is come!



# ANNOUNCEMENTS ANNOUNCEMENTS ANNOUNCEMENTS ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Preaching in December

|             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| December 3  | Pastor AJ Platt |
| December 10 | Pastor AJ Platt |
| December 17 | Pastor AJ Platt |
| December 24 | Pastor AJ Platt |
| December 31 | Pastor AJ Platt |

## Christmas Eve Service

The service is Sunday, December 24 at 7:00pm. The cantata is entitled "Light of Lights" by Joel Raney. The choir members are asked to be at the church by 6:15pm.

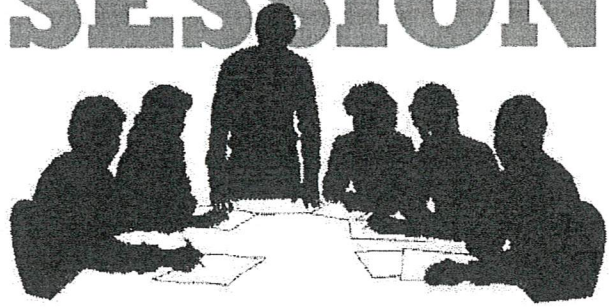
## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual Congregational meeting will be December 10, 2023 for the purpose of electing elders to the class of 2026, electing a nominating committee for 2024, and presenting Pastor AJ's contract.

## Children's Church

Children's church will begin December 3 for ages up to third grade. Children will be dismissed for class prior to the message. Anyone interested in teaching please let Sharon Davies know.

# SESSION



Session met November 13 and was opened with prayer.

The next Presbytery meeting is February 17, 2024 at Peters Creek EPC in Valencia, PA.

A congregational meeting is scheduled for December 10 to elect an elder to the class of 2026. Also a nominating committee to be elected as well as presenting Pastor AJ's contract.

The session met with Pastor AJ who shared two suggestion plans for pastoral service.

Discussed talking with other churches which have food pantries and maybe start one up twice a month. Bethel church serves between 40-60 families each time. This might be more than we are willing to do.

We have 4 new wireless mics and the feed from the computer has been fixed. The entire system has been tuned for us. Scott also learned quite a bit on how to use the sound system. Approval was given to sell the excess stereo equipment from the sound board.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

