



# HPC CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 2018 NEWSLETTER | VOLUME 18, ISSUE 1

Happy New Year!

The year 2018 is now upon us and with it's arrival brings new hope for a brighter year. We have, once again, celebrated the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We have walked through the four weeks of Advent and reflected on the year past. We faced our grief and sorrow, we recognized the dry desert in our spirits but, hopefully, we were together in experiencing a renewal – a transformation within as we walked together with new hope, longing for peace, realizing that joy is ours regardless of what is happening in our lives. We may not always feel that joy, but if we are a worshipper of Jesus we know that deep down joy is ours because we have him. He has changed the world. And he has never left us alone to deal with life without his help.

The angel, Gabriel, said his name would be called Jesus, which means “one who saves.” Jesus’ purpose in coming to earth was to save us from the darkness we tend to find ourselves in. The darkest of dark is that of sin. Why? Because we don’t know how to step out of it by ourselves. But Jesus came to offer hope and most of all, to give us grace. Because we are so helpless when it comes to saving ourselves from sin, Jesus did it for us. And because he did in giving his life for us, we are promised that death is not the end. We have that amazing grace and hope that we will be raised to new life – eternal life – and will live in the glory and joy of the Lord forever. Such love!

Being promised life after death is an amazing promise, isn't it? But we have other promises too. One that I love is that Gabriel also said the baby would be called Immanuel, which means *God is with us*. GOD IS WITH US! That's not a promise just for life after we leave this human, earthly life. That is a promise that he is with us throughout our entire life. We are never alone to deal with our sickness, our fears, our sorrows and grief. We are never alone when we celebrate milestones in our lives. God is with us!

To me, that reminder gives me great joy and relief. Because if God is with us, then how could we not be okay in every situation? Yes, things can be difficult and we certainly are not without fear at times. We can get very confused and really down spiritually and emotionally. But if God is with us, if we will just remember that, we can turn to him and find comfort, guidance and compassion, courage, forgiveness and grace.

I believe in the incarnation. That is, God coming to us in the flesh and bones of a tiny human baby so that we might know God, know his love, and never be alone.

In this new year I pray that you will feel the loving presence of God, who is with you, as close as your very breath. I pray that you will always remember that nothing – absolutely nothing – can ever separate you from God's love. You are his child. He is constantly working in your life for your well-being.

May the new year bring many blessings and much joy to you all – my dear congregation.

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. –Philippians 4:4-7*

Peace & Grace,

Reverend Sharlyn



## Care Team

**Quote for the month:** *Finally, all of you live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. 1 Peter 3:8*

**Pantry Upcoming Dates:** Friday, Jan 12th 10:00 a - 12:00 p; Saturday Jan 20th 10:00 a - 12:00 p; Fri Jan 26th 10:00 a - 12:00 p.

**Baby Needs:** We are in need of kleenex, clothing sizes 3, 4, and 5T. Donations can be placed in the crib in the narthex. Financial donations can be placed in the offering plate with a notation on the envelope marked "Baby Pantry". Thank you so much for your continued support.

**Healthy Check up** - will be on Sunday, January 21st. Don't forget to see Nurse Char or Nurse Karen. Your health could depend on it.

Jan Bradshaw, Beth Dryer, Loretta Weiss, Jennifer Chanter.



God Bless you all on your special day!

Lucas Carl	Jan 1st
Ryan Day	Jan 1st
Haley Day	Jan 1st
Tim Bird	Jan 6th
Donna Miller	Jan 15th
Rick Perry	Jan 17th
Rachel Sparling	Jan 25th
Doris Colegrove	Jan 30th

## Our Fellowship and Study Opportunities

**Adult Sunday School - No class on Jan 14th.** Sundays at 9:30 a in the Community Room. We are studying the Jewish background of Jesus, and looking at the archeological sites where Biblical events occurred. All adults and high school students are welcome to be part of this class and join the discussions.



**Presbyterian Women's Bible Study** - Wednesday's at 7:00 p. We will be studying the scriptures for the coming Sunday. This is a great time of learning and fellowship, led by Rev Sharlyn.

**Presbyterian Men's Bible Study** - Wednesday's at 7:00 p. Please join us. Each week we discuss the scriptures for the upcoming Sunday. It is a good learning time and fellowship as well, led by Randy Cook.

**Children's Sunday School** -10:30 a - 11:00 a in the Gathering Place. Children of all ages are welcome. Angel Vliet is the teacher.

## Finance Team Thoughts



A popular children's book tells the story of a poor, country boy who took off his cap to honor the king. An identical hat appeared instantly in its place on his head, inciting the king's anger for what appeared to be disrespect. Bartholomew removed hat after hat while being escorted to the palace for punishment. Each time, a new one appeared in its place. The hats grew.

increasingly fancy, bearing precious jewels and feather plumes. The 500th hat was the envy of the King, who pardoned Bartholomew and purchased the hat for 500 pieces of gold. At last his head was bare; he walked home with freedom and money to support his family.

A widow came to Elisha in financial distress, fearing her children would be sold into slavery to pay her debts. She had no assets other than a jar of oil. God multiplied that oil to fill enough borrowed jars to settle the debts plus care for their daily needs.

God provided financially for the widow in much the same way He provides salvation for us. We are bankrupted by sin, but Jesus paid our debt – and offers us eternal life as well! Without Jesus, we are each like the poor, country boy with no means to pay our King for our offenses against Him. God miraculously supplies the extravagant ransom for us, and ensures that those who trust in Him will have life abundantly forever.

What should we do? Thank You Lord, for paying our debt through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We had nothing; You paid it all for us. Alleluia!

Income	November \$ 7,323.61	YTD \$120,446.36
Expenses	November \$10,971.58	YTD \$127,901.39

Finance Team: Vicki Lyles, Carrie Duncanson, Laura Parker, Rev. Sharlyn Gates and Bob Killewald

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**Regular Weekly Events**

**Sunday**

9:30 a Adult Sunday School  
10:30 a Fellowship & Coffee  
10:30 a - 11:00 a Kids Sunday School  
11:00 a Worship  
12:15 p Prayer Ministry  
3:00 pm AA

**Monday**

7:30 pm AA & Alanon

**Tuesday thru Thursday**

12:00 pm - 3:00 pm Friends with Needs

**Wednesday**

7:00 p Presbyterian Men's Bible Study with Randy Cook  
7:00 p Presbyterian Women's Bible Study with Rev Sharlyn

**Schedule of Additional Events**

Jan 2nd	<b>Team Meetings</b> Worship 6:30 p - 7:30 p Information Technology 7:00 p - 8:00 p Personnel 7:00 p - 7:30 p Christian Education 7:30 p - 8:30 p
Jan 7th	10:00 a <b>Fellowship Team Meeting</b>
Jan 9th	<b>Team Meetings</b> Finance 6:30 p - 7:30 p Care 6:30 p - 7:00 p Outreach 6:30 p - 7:30 p Property 7:00 p - 8:00 p
Jan 11th	7:00 p AYSO
Jan 12th	10:00 a - 12:00 p Baby Pantry
Jan 14th	NO Adult Sunday School
Jan 20th	10:00 a - 12:00 p Baby Pantry
Jan 21st	Healthy Check up
Jan 26th	10:00 a - 12:00 p Baby Pantry



## Our Church Family Prayer Concerns & Joys

- **Strength, renewal, and healing for:** Linda Voorheis, Linda Kelly, Claudia Morton (Peters), Roberta Single, Janis Dorsey, Beverly Glass (Elizabeth Kici friend's daughter), Suzie Dorsey, Marty Rodriquez (Kathleen Howe -boyfriend of her future daughter-in-law's sister), William Woodard (Rev Fred Gates grandson), Richard Murphy (father-in-law of Mandie Banks), Dan Nash, William Graham (nephew of Vicki Lyles), Carlton Pernel (Gerry Jackson's friend), Ken Hecht, Norm Clement, Roy Howe (Kathleen Howe's brother-in-law), Hadleigh Banks, Paul Burnett (neighbor of Killewalds), and Cari Oldenburg (friend of Cathie Killewald).
- Peace and comfort for the families of Lois Caryl and Bev Nash (Dan Nash's mother).
- For the violence, racism, and killings to leave this place and replace it with peace, unity, compassion for others, and people's eyes become open to who Jesus is and his love.
- God's love, joy, peace and hope surround the people affected by all recent disasters. They are not forgotten.
- Remember to pray daily for this church and our pastor.
- Prayers for our members who are home bound or in care facilities.
- For our country and its leaders.
- Thankful to God that we are a free country and for the people who protect us.



## Pray for Missionaries & Lake Huron Presbytery

- The Rev. Ken Hetzel, (retired) who is experiencing some heart issues again.
- Bruce Graham, husband of the Rev. Linda Graham, Pastor of Cass City-First and Cass City Fraser who is recovering from surgery earlier this week.
- Michael Hosler, son of Elders Alan and Cheryl Hosler, Croswell-First who is doing very well following recent open heart surgery.
- The Rev. Jim Neumann, Pastor of Saginaw-Second who is doing well and recovering from back surgery.
- Pam Brackbill and the Rev. Tom Brackbill, Pastor of Alma-First as they deal with all that encompasses Pam's diagnosis of Younger Onset Alzheimer's Disease. Pam is under the care of Masonic Pathways.
- The Reverend Cathy Chang and her family serving in the Philippines, Michael and Rachel Ludwig serving in Niger, Colby and Sarah Keefer and family in Ypsilanti (Athletes in Action), and Allen and Deedee Iobst and family in Spain.



## New Year...It's a Fresh Start

Well, as you wind down 2017, think about what you have done for God this year. He gave his son for us, now what things can we do for God in 2018? Come and get involved in your church. There are a lot of opportunities. Being on a team, signing up on the Worship Volunteer Sheet for a month, signing up for Coffee hour to bring a snack, helping around the church, praying for your pastor and your church, visiting or calling on the shut-ins, a new group needs to start planning now for the Neighborhood Block Party this summer, just to name a few.

Let's make 2018 our best year ever!



## From the Lion's Den

### What Happens in the Dark?

December in Michigan is dark and gray. The short days and overcast skies take their toll on our physical and psychological well-being. It is no accident that we celebrate Christmas when darkness is preponderant, when we are most in need of light and hope. The scriptures give us scant clues as to the actual day of Christ's birth, so the selection of December 25 for its celebration was determined by theology, not history. The rich message of the incarnation found in the opening chapter of John's gospel expresses it well: "What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:3b-5). Christ comes as light in our darkness.



Fear of the dark is primal. I remember once driving a long stretch of US-50 across Nevada at night. There were no towns, no street lights, no moon, and no other traffic. I had to trust my headlights to illumine the way, five hundred feet at a time, across miles of desert darkness. I remember the sheer joy of cresting a hill and seeing the distant light of a town maybe 15 miles in the distance. The joy came in knowing there was a place of safety ahead, a place where the darkness did not prevail.

That's the message of Advent and Christmas. Christ has shown us that there is light in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it. There is hope that lifts despair, comfort that drives out fear, and a shining future to guide our earthly travels.

My friend Paul Hooker, who serves on the faculty of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, is also a poet of some talent. I recently came across a poem of his posted on the blog *Ecclesio.com*, titled "Adventus" (<http://www.ecclesio.com/2017/12/adventus-paul-hooker/>):

*When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem...." - Luke 2:15*

What proximate apocalypse arrives tomorrow? Lost key lost love cancer butterfly extinction blood on the floor of schoolyards sanctuaries-must we endure yet more of heaven's plan? Do you dare to raise your eyes, peek between the stars to see the angels turn for home after they have rearranged your dreams? After the dream comes the dark.

"Be not afraid": why do the blessed say this? When the only reasonable response is fear or maybe flight if you can make your feet work? Are you not supposed to fear the beast? When you meet a bear-or host of angels-and your back's against the wall, will you stand your ground before the feral claws of glory? After the glory comes the dark.

Do you yearn to leave the sheep and wander into town to search for manger mother child aglow with heaven's subtle light; leave the eastern palaces to track a star, offer homage at the hard world's fraying edge; leave the boats and nets and trail a migrant preacher pinned like a butterfly to a cross? After the cross comes the dark.

And who knows what might happen in the dark? What happens in the dark is light and hope and resurrection. What happens in the dark is Jesus.

Faithfully,

Dan Saperstein, Executive Presbyterian

[dsaperstein@presbylh.org](mailto:dsaperstein@presbylh.org)

## Fellowship Team

- **Fellowship Team** Meeting on Sunday January 7th at 10:00 a in the back of the Fellowship Hall.
- Coffee & Snack Volunteers for:

Jan 7th	No one at this time.
Jan 14th	No one at this time.
Jan 21st	Penny Schettling & Loretta Weiss
Jan 28th	Kevin Magnuson



Please look at your calendar and see if you can fill one of these times for bringing a snack and helping with clean up.

Thank you!

Margaret & Cathie

**To help those affected by the Hurricanes:** For those who wish to support through PDA (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) emergency and recovery efforts, go online at: <http://pda.pcusa.org> and select which one you want your money to go to.

If you prefer to mail a check, you may sent it to: Presbyterian Church (USA), PO Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

For Hurricane Harvey DR000169, Irma designate DR000194, and for Puerto Rico designate DR0000194.

**Please remember these people are still hurting and are still trying to rebuild their town.**

## Update From The Ludwigs -Missionaries

It was another active month with a lot of things happening at the end. From making progress in language as a family to teaching new things in CHE, from visiting church harvest services to graduations, and even a special visit to a new building site! We've also been busy learning and testing out techniques for some special CHE microbusiness ideas, like grinding sesame seed and raising fish. As we wrote in our last Mission Connection letter, our EERN church supervisor recently made a big deal of the ways we've impacted their work. We know we are only one part of their efforts, but we value this feedback as a good reflection of the prayers and support you all continue to pass on to be a life-giving part of what God is doing here in Niger.

CHE visiting - Michael and Issa had a great visit with the 4 CHE evangelists in the Dog on douchi area. We worked on making natural compost and several lessons on having healthy homes. We continued working with the Bible school students at Ague and even snuck in several lessons on how to make highly efficient clay cooking stoves before final exams. The students were amazed and energized to learn why these keep heat so much better than the traditional pot-on-3-rocks method of cooking. We are also starting to plan the major training of 30 more evangelists in the Maradi region in early February!

Continued on next page

Everything Family - We had a very nice Thanksgiving celebration with some other US missionaries in OUR city. We're grateful that our area seems to be safe and the situation is very calm. Please pray with us as we are thinking about living in closer community to the students at a Bible school for a month. This mini move would give us a simple lifestyle, more conversation in Hausa, and maybe some opportunity to share more CHE projects with the students. But we're still in the beginning stages of considering this.

If you would like to follow their adventures and their mission work in Niger, please contact Staci Percy at [spercy@presbylh.org](mailto:spercy@presbylh.org) or 989-799-7481 x2 for their blog address. *(They have asked that the link to it not be published online.)*

### TEAM MEETINGS FOR JANUARY

The times indicated are approximate and may vary. If you would like to join a team or see what it is all about, just come at the selected time to the church and see the Team leader. We always need input and ideas.

#### **Team Meeting for January 7th**

10:00 a Fellowship Team - back of Fellowship Hall

#### **Team Meeting for January 2nd**

Worship 6:30 p - 7:30 p

Christian Education 7:30 p - 8:30 p

Personnel 7:00 p - 7:30 p

Information Technology 7:00p - 8:00p

#### **Team Meeting for January 9th**

Finance 6:30 p - 7:30 p

Care 6:30 p - 7:00 p

Outreach 6:30 p - 7:30 p

Property 7:30 p - 8:30 p

**Session** meets on January 16th.



### Our 2017 Session

<b>Class of 2017</b>	Margaret Perry	Fellowship Team	(810) 735-7692
	Reisa Hamilton	Outreach Team	(248) 766-7719
	Karen Haneline	Care Team	(248) 894-3489
<b>Class of 2018</b>	Charlee Litten	Personnel Team	(810) 694-0095
	Ellen Paulson	Clerk	(248) 320-0375
	vacant	Technology Team (Walt Brown is temporarily leading)	
	Linda Burns	Worship Team	(586) 482-3091
<b>Class of 2019</b>	Bob Killewald	Finance Team	(248) 310-2410
	Randy Cook	Property Team	(248) 221-9044
	Charlene Clement	Christian Ed Team	(810) 869-2632

**Minister:** The Rev Dr Sharlyn DeHaven Gates (620) 423-2671