



# The Presbyter

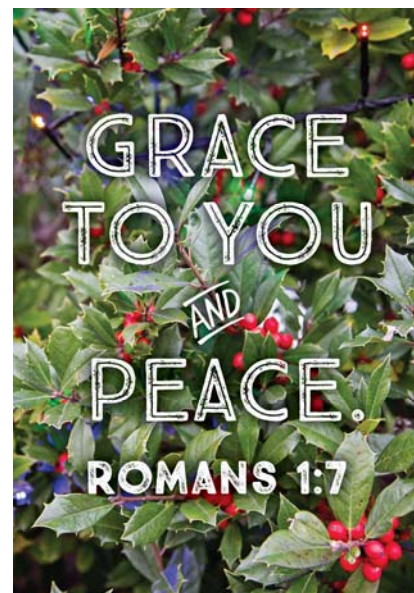
December 2016

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

## Join us for worship on Christmas Eve

- ◆ At **6:30 p.m.** we welcome children and their families for a special service planned with them in mind. We sing our favorite carols and retell the Christmas story in a fresh and engaging way. This year, we hear advance reports that three Wise Men will visit us.
- ◆ Our **9:00 p.m.** service is a traditional Lessons and Carols service with our Adult Choir leading us in the singing of carols. Rev. Carter will preach, and we conclude by lighting candles to "Silent Night".
- ◆ The **11:00 p.m.** service is a joyful and informal jazz communion for Christmas. This year, we welcome Jeff Stockham on trumpet and French horn with the Presbybop Christmas Eve Band. It will be a great way to welcome the birth of Christ.

**We will worship on Sunday, December 25**, with a special Christmas Day communion service at 10:00 a.m.



Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

By giving to the **Christmas Joy Offering**, you honor this gift by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. We will dedicate the offering on Christmas Day

## Table of Contents

- Page 2 - Notes from Session, Financial Info, Per Capita
- Page 3 - From The Pastor, Advent Devotional Blog
- Page 4 - Mission & Justice
- Page 5 - Kids Page
- Page 6 - The Way
- Page 7 - Adventures in The Bible, Youth Group, Advent Program
- Page 8 - Book Review, Presbyterian Women
- Page 9 - Stephen Ministry, Men's Breakfast, Special Dates, Flower Calendar
- Page 10 - Joys & Sorrows, Lectionary Readings, Ushers, Welcomers, Communion Team, Thank You Notes
- Page 11 - Calendar
- Page 12 - Teachers Needed, The Way Dinner Volunteers

**Notes from the Session Meeting, November 15, 2016**

*Elder David Naeher offered this prayer before our meeting:*

Dear Heavenly Father, in this time of great national discourse and division, fear and expectation, we turn to you as the timeless, constant and unchanging God. Help us to know that, despite the issues that face us as a people, the sun will continue to rise by day and the moon by night. The seasons will change, just as autumn with its brilliant colors will soon be followed by winter. Children will laugh and play, and learn and those blessed with long lives will share their accumulated experiences and wisdom with others. Guide us as we seek to be your faithful people, and fill our hearts with your boundless love. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Meeting Business:**

- ◆ The sound system is being repaired.
- ◆ The Finance Committee has requested that Session meet again in December to finalize and pass the 2017 budget.
- ◆ The Session sends wishes for a Blessed Holiday Season to members and friends of the First Presbyterian Church.

**The Presbyterian deadline for  
The January issue is  
December 16, 2016**

The Presbyterian is a monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church, 300 School Street, Clarks Summit, PA 18411.

All visitors are welcome to worship with us. **Worship services are held on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.** Child care is available. Communion is observed the first Sunday of every month.

If you do not attend a church in this area, we invite you to any and all of the events, programs, and worship services described in this newsletter. Please call the church office to arrange child care. Our sanctuary and Fellowship Hall are both handicapped accessible.

<b>Church Office</b>	<b>(570) 586-6306</b>
<b>Fax</b>	<b>(570) 587-3784</b>
<b>Web Page</b>	<b>www.fpccs.org</b>
<b>Pastor</b>	William G. Carter
<b>Administrative Assistant</b>	Nancy Owens
<b>Coordinator of Children &amp; Youth</b>	Jana Schillinger
<b>Treasurer</b>	Wayne Griffiths
<b>Editor</b>	Lindsey Hardy
<b>Clerk of Session</b>	Beverly Bright
<b>Director of Music</b>	Frank Jones
<b>Director of Bells</b>	Richard Cochrane
<b>Director of Chapel Choir</b>	Kay Ten Eyck
<b>Organist</b>	Kay Ten Eyck
<b>Sexton</b>	John Conklin



**FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE  
FOR THE MONTH ENDING October 31, 2016**

REVENUE

Budget	\$ 294,500
Actual Received	<u>271,987</u>
Difference	\$ (22,513)
	=====

EXPENSES

Budget	\$ 293,671
Actual Expenses	<u>277,983</u>
Difference	\$ (15,747)
	=====

BUDGET VARIANCE \$ (5,936)

PLEDGE INCOME

Budget	\$ 266,667
Received	<u>247,316</u>
Difference	\$ (19,351)

Per Capita 2016 total Received to date - \$4,190.  
The 2016 Church Per Capita due to the Presbytery of Lackawanna, General Assembly, and The Synod = \$16,500.

Dear Friends,

One of the unusual aspects of the Bible's Christmas story is the number of senior citizens who populate the story. Ever notice that?

We don't know the age of mother Mary, although we can presume that she may have been a teenager, as was the custom of the time and culture. Joseph's age is also unknown. He may have been a good bit older than Mary, which might explain why he became absent in the story of the grown-up Jesus. The age of shepherds are unknown, just like their names. Angels, as you can surmise, are timeless.



But look who appears in the Bible's Christmas pageant:

- ◆ Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist. The priest and his wife are “getting up in years.” Like Abraham and Sarah in the book of Genesis, they do not have children, and believe themselves to be too old. And guess what! (Luke 1:5-25)
- ◆ Simeon stands in the shadows of the Jerusalem temple, waiting for God's Messiah to appear. Luke calls him “righteous and devout,” and declares the Holy Spirit has revealed that the Savior will appear before Simeon passes on. (Luke 2:25-35)
- ◆ There's a woman of “great age” named Anna. A widow for many years, she, too, lingers around the temple, devoted to worship, fasting, and prayer. She sees the baby Jesus and bursts into ecstatic speech, foreshadowing the Pentecost day when the Holy Spirit will come upon women and men and they will burst into songs and sermons. (Luke 2:36-38)

It seems that Luke is reminding us that the birth of the Christ is for all ages. Christmas must not be wasted on the young. There is something vital and life-giving that comes as God breaks into our world through Jesus. Zechariah sings it after his son John is born:

“By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:78-79)

Our Christian faith is that these words are more than promises or metaphors. They witness to the reality of God's grace, lifting us out of potential despair and dead-end bad habits, and lifting us into a cleansing, healing light. The Christmas story serves to amplify on the small movements of God's Spirit. When we worship together during this season, we are transported to the shepherd's fields so that we can hear the angels sing. We are carried to the shadows of the Jerusalem temple to hear an old man say, “My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples.” (Luke 1:30-31)

This is the truth of the Gospel. Light a candle and join us as we rejoice.

Merry Christmas to you and yours,

*Rev. Bill Carter*

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***Have you found our online Advent devotional? Go to <http://adventfpccs.blogspot.com>.  
Read Biblical reflections by our members for every day in Advent. Or you can subscribe to  
have the meditations sent to you by email. Printed copies are also available in the Narthex.***

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## MISSION AND JUSTICE



**Our Holiday Pajama Drive** is in progress. Please pick up a tag from the tree in the Narthex, purchase the PJ'S, wrap or enclose in a gift bag (*correction* from previous announcements) and return to the church by **December 10**. Please make sure the tag is attached to the package which contains important information as to which Head Start Center receives it. We're also asking that you sign the notebook with your name and the child's name and, when returning it to the church, check your name off. Any questions call Janet Dobson, 570-563-1887 or Tyler Kusma, 570-209-1763



**Bethel AME Shelter:** The Mission and Justice Committee recently provided \$400 in start up supplies on your behalf to help open the Bethel AME cold weather homeless shelter. Your help is also needed in providing a warm meal on Sunday evenings for 24 people who are seeking refuge from the cold. It will be the most appreciated meal you ever served. The sign up sheet is located in the Narthex. Questions may be directed to Melba Fialko, 570-586-2563.



**St. Francis Clothing Center** is in need of all types of clean, gently used warm clothing for men and women. Specific needs include jeans, sweatshirts, long sleeve shirts, warm coats, new socks and underwear. Please leave your donations in the box located in fellowship hall. Clothing will be delivered weekly.



SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS

**Peace and Global Witness Offering:** Thank you for your generous support! Together we gave \$1480, surpassing last year. That allowed us to donate 1/4 of the offering, \$370, to the Catherine McAuley Center. We added \$630 from our budget to round up the gift to \$1000.



The **Alternative Gift Market** on November 20 was a rewarding experience. Participants included SERRV, Heifer International, Verve Vertu, Appalachian Service Project, Reaching the Pygmies, and Presbyterian Coffee Project. It is important to advocate for and support the artisans, trades people, mission workers and farmers who benefit from our market. We hope you and those who receive your gifts have a blessed Christmas.

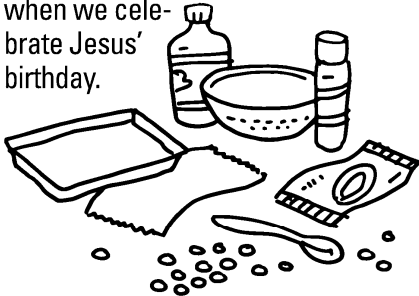


There was a successful clean up of our **Adopt-a-Highway** section of the Morgan Highway on Saturday, November 12. Thanks to all church volunteers who participated.



# birthday bark

Make this yummy treat to give to family and friends at Christmas, when we celebrate Jesus' birthday.



### What you need:

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 3 cups chocolate chips
- Microwave-safe bowl
- Spoon or spatula
- 2 Tbsp. shortening
- Baking tray lined with wax paper
- Red and green M&M's (or sprinkles)

### What you do:

1. Lightly spray bowl and wax paper.
2. Microwave chocolate chips in bowl for one-minute intervals until chocolate is melted. (Stir after each minute.)
3. Stir in shortening. Heat in 10-second intervals, stirring until smooth.
4. Pour chocolate onto tray and firmly press in M&M's or sprinkles.
5. Refrigerate until firm. Remove bark and break into pieces.

**PUZZLE**

## The greatest gift

Gift-giving is a fun Christmas tradition. What very special gift has God given to you?

**Directions:** Write the words from each puzzle piece on the matching blank piece of the gift-shaped puzzle.

Puzzle pieces include:

- life in
- but the
- our Lord.
- Romans 6:23, NIV
- gift of God
- For the
- of sin is
- Christ Jesus
- is eternal
- wages
- death,

Answer: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23, NIV

Christian Education



It's for life!

**THE W.A.Y.**The Wednesday Adulds and Youth Christian Education

"I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE"

Supper, 5:00 \* Classes for all ages, 6:15

**IMPORTANT DATES**

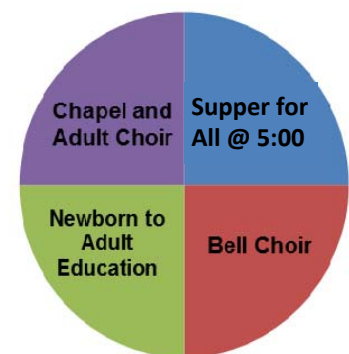
**Sunday, December 4** - Advent Special for all ages, 11:15 Potluck with program to follow.  
**Wednesday, December 21** and **Wednesday, December 28** - No WAY classes. Merry Christmas!

**Welcome to Wednesdays**

**Spark (Newborn - 3 year old)** enjoy Bible stories, songs and games in the nursery. In December they will be learning about Mary's visit to Elizabeth and the birth of Jesus.

**Power Xpress (4 year old - Grade 5)** Are divided into two age groups and experience Bible stories through interactive rotation classes. December's unit will be Journey to Bethlehem.

**We Believe (Grades 6-8)** This fall, students will explore a unit called *Knowing God*, answering questions about who God is and who we are as Christians. In December, we will answer: How Strong is God's Power? and What Does My View of God Have to Do with the Way I Live My Life?



**Adults** will meet in December for two studies on Wednesday nights:

- ◆ **Sabbath in December** is a class that Rev. Bill will lead in Room 206. Why is the Christmas season so frantic for us? What can we do to find peace at the center of it all? One good answer can be found in the Bible's teachings about Sabbath and how to keep it. We will draw upon the work of scholar Walter Brueggemann as we prepare to keep time for reflection, worship, family, and rest.
- ◆ **Singing Our Way to Bethlehem** will meet with Myrna Diven in Room 210. Let's take a closer look at the Advent and Christmas carols that we sing once a year. What do they say of our hopes? What do they promise as we prepare for the coming of Christ? How does the singing of carols proclaim our faith, in ways that mere words cannot quite do? Come and join us.

**Wednesday Supper Reservations**

**Light Supper** is served before The Way classes from 5:00-6:10 for those with **reservations**.  
Suggested donation: \$3 per person.

Please return reservation slips no later than **Monday**. Slips can be placed in the **basket near the phone in the kitchen** or in the **offering plate**. You may also **call the church office** to make reservations.

Reservations slips can be found in the church office, in the kitchen, or in pews.



**Christian Education is an important part of who we are and what we do...and we need YOU to make it happen.**

**How? You can enrich your own faith and help our church grow in Christ by:**

- ◆ ◆ Attending the W.A.Y. for dinner, classes, and choirs...we want to see you here!
- ◆ ◆ Bringing a friend...new faces are always welcome.
- ◆ ◆ Volunteering to teach...at any grade level for any amount of time, you can help our children and adults learn and grow. Please prayerfully consider helping with this important ministry.
- ◆ ◆ Helping to set up for, cook, and serve our weekly meal...our church family loves to eat.
- ◆ ◆ Joining the CE committee...our group meets the first Thursday of each month to plan the W.A.Y., youth group, special events, and more — we're always looking to hear from new voices.

### Youth Fellowship

All youth grades 4-12 are invited to join us

Sunday, December 11th, 12:30-2:30PM

for a **Scavenger Hunt and More!**

(lunch provided)

and

Friday, December 23rd, 6:30-8:30PM

for a **Christmas Party**

Bring a friend! New faces always welcome.

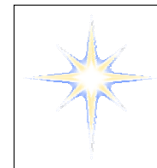
### Advent Program

**Discover the promise that the season of  
Advent holds!**

Join us on Sunday, December 4th, after  
worship.

11:15 Potluck lunch — please bring a main  
or side dish to pass.

Program and activity for all ages to follow.



### We want your children to join us for a new adventure!

Adventures in the Bible, a Sunday morning gathering for children ages 2-7 and their parent(s) or grandparent(s), has begun, and we are eager to welcome more children to the group. Each week, we will meet from 9:00 - 9:45 in room 111 to

- explore a Bible story,
- bring the story to life with an activity or craft, and
- sing songs of praise.

Feel free to email either Tabbi Miller-Scandle (tabbi.miller-scandle@scranton.edu) or Karis Naeher (klnaeher@outlook.com) with any questions.

Join us to prepare for the next part of the journey . . . worship!

**Adventures in  
the Bible**





We are taking a break in December for the holidays. We will get together again on January 26, 2017 at Judy Cutler's home. Come join us for a discussion of **The Nest** by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney. Every family has its problems. But even among the most troubled, the Plumb family stands out as dysfunctional. Years of simmering tensions reach a breaking point on a cold afternoon in New York City as Melody, Beatrice, and Jack Plumb gather to confront their charismatic and reckless older brother, Leo, freshly released from rehab. Months earlier, an inebriated Leo got behind the wheel of a car with a nineteen-year-old waitress as his passenger. The ensuing accident has endangered the Plumbs' joint trust fund, "The Nest," which they are months away from finally receiving.

Meant by their deceased father to be a modest mid-life supplement, the Plumb siblings have watched The Nest's value soar along with the stock market and have been counting on the money to solve a number of self-inflicted

problems. Melody, a wife and mother in an upscale suburb, has an unwieldy mortgage and looming college tuition for her twin teenage daughters. Jack, an antiques dealer, has secretly borrowed against the beach cottage he shares with his husband, Walker, to keep his store open. And Bea, a once-promising short-story writer, can't seem to finish her overdue novel. Can Leo rescue his siblings and the people they love? Or will everyone need to reimagine the futures they've envisioned?

Brought together as never before, Leo, Melody, Jack, and Beatrice must grapple with old resentments, present-day truths, and the significant emotional and financial toll of the accident, as well as finally acknowledge the choices they have made in their own lives.

This is a story about the power of family, the possibilities of friendship, the ways we depend upon one another and the ways we let one another down. In this tender, entertaining, and deftly written debut, Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney brings a remarkable cast of characters to life to illuminate what money does to relationships, what happens to our ambitions over the course of time, and the fraught yet unbreakable ties we share with those we love.

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Our December Bible Study "Who is Jesus" will focus on Jesus in the Gospel of John as being one with God. What a perfect way to celebrate Advent together talking about Jesus from creation, birth, Passover Lamb and the Great I AM's.

We will also be having some special Christian fellowship with lunches or supper. This is our schedule and we would welcome all regular participants and new faces. If anyone needs a ride, please notice the names and phone numbers to call.

**Dorcas Circle**—We will meet December 20 at 10:00 a.m. at the church for the lesson on John and lunch will be at 12:00 p.m. at Glenburn Grill. Call Barbara Pittman at 570-587-2050.

**Priscilla Circle** - We will meet December 13 at 12:30 at J.J.Bridges for lunch. Two lessons (John & Paul) will be done in January. Call Bonnie Plantholt at 570-586-0963.

**Eunice Circle** - We will meet on December 20 at 6:00 p.m. at the church for Pot Luck Dinner. A brief discussion about Christmas cards will take place. Call Katie Hopkins at 570-587-2390.





Grieving .....Sometimes a thought provoking reminder

A few weeks ago I had to find something in my file cabinet. It was strange territory for me as Jo was also my secretary, as most of you know. As I found what I needed, in closing the drawer I noticed a manila folder with nothing written on it, so out of simple curiosity I opened it and found the following.

But before you read it.....Jo was eleven years younger than I was, and with my age and a health issue it was our belief that she would have to plan my demise and apparently at a time unknown to me she was putting her Ducks in order. This is what I found in the folder:

### GOD HAS CALLED ME

Death is nothing at all. It does not count. I have only slipped away into the next room. Nothing has happened. Everything remains exactly as it was. I am I, and you are you, and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged. Whatever we were to each other, that we are still. Call me by the old familiar name. Speak of me in the easy way which you always used. Put no difference in your tone. Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together. Play, smile, think of me, pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word it always was. Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow upon it. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was. There is absolute and unbroken continuity. What is death but a negligible accident? Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am but waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner. All is well!

Jo taught me well.....grief is slowly ebbing.....but for those you have lost, love never dies. For God so loved the world.....

Stephen Ministry works, it worked for me and it will work for you!



**Men's Breakfast date changes:** For the next three months, we are going to move the Breakfast to the second and fourth Thursdays at 8:30. The upcoming dates are: December 8 and 22, January 12 and 26. The regular schedule will resume in February.

**Let's Celebrate Special Dates:** The Deacons are putting together a calendar marking special days in our lives. Please add your name to the notebook in the narthex during the first 3 Sundays in December indicating your birthday/anniversary or any date about which you want the congregation to know. (Year not necessary!) Our goal is to give others an opportunity to celebrate our special days with cards, prayers or verbal greetings. Questions, contact Gwynne Gilbert, 570-586-9317. All family members can be included.

The **2017 Flower Calendar** has been hung on the bulletin board in the hallway. If you would like to contribute flowers for a Sunday morning next year, please sign the poster.

## Joys and Sorrows



The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Lois Stoeckel, who passed from this earth October 31, 2016. The Reverend Virginia Miner conducted the memorial service for her on November 4, 2016.

Thank you to all who assisted with the luncheon that took place following the memorial service. It was very much appreciated by the family.



TO THE CONGREGATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF CLARKS SIMMIT

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY IT WAS! It is difficult to find the words to express our appreciation for such a lovely reception. Sharing fellowship with members of our congregation, friends, and family made it a day we will always remember.

We thank Rev. Carter for recognizing the entire congregation for sharing their time and talents to the mission of our Church. The prayer and music by the Choir reminded us that we are all one in Christ.

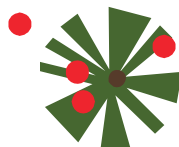
To our Historian – John Pittman - we thank him for sharing “just the good things about the McLaughlins”.

Again, to the Session and entire congregation, we thank you for this very special occasion.

Jim and Shirley McLaughlin



The Chapel Choir would like to thank Jeanne Comly for our beautiful new stoles! They are reversible with a stained glass pattern on one side and cream with a red applique on the other side. We love them and very much appreciate this generous gift from Jeanne in memory of her late husband, Dave Comly.



## Lectionary Readings

### December 4

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

### December 11

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10; Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

### December 18

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7; 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

### December 25

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14



### Welcomers:

December 4 – Mary Parry

December 11, 18, 25 – John Conklin

### Communion servers:

Beverly Bright, captain; Kim Barrows, Judy Cutler, Janet Stansbury, Chris Norton



**WELCOME!**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>DECEMBER</b>						
				7 am-AA 1 7 pm-Building/ Grounds 7 pm-Christian Ed	7 am-AA 2	7 am-AA 3
7 am-AA 4 9 am-Adv in Bible 10 am Worship 11:15-Advent program and pot- luck lunch 3:00-OA	7 am-AA 5 7 pm-Mission & Justice	7 am-AA 6 10 am-PW Board 4 pm-Art Class 7 pm-OA 7 pm-Big Book 7 pm-Deacons	7 am-AA 7 11 am-Prayer/Share 5 pm-WAY supper 5:30-Chapel Ch 6:15-CE classes 7:15-Adult Ch 8:30-Bell Ch	7 am-AA 8 8:30am-Men's Brkfst 4:30 pm-Staff	7 am-AA 9	7 am-AA 10
11 7 am-AA 9 am-Adv in Bible 10 am-Worship 11:15-Confirmation 11:15-Session 12:30-Youth Group 3 pm-OA	12 7 am-AA	13 7 am-AA 10 am-MBK Quilts 12:30-Priscilla Cir. 4 pm-Art Class 4 pm-Big Book 7 pm-OA	14 11am-Prayer/Share 1 pm-LP COM 5 pm-WAY supper 5:30-Chapel Ch 6:15-CE classes 7:15-Adult Ch 8:30-Bell Ch	15 7 am-AA 6:30 pm-Fellowship	16 7 am-AA <b>Presbyter Deadline</b>	17 7 am-AA Recital
18 7 am-AA 9 am-Adv.in Bible 10 am-Worship 11:15-Confirmation 6 pm-Recital	19 7 am-AA	20 7 am-AA 10am, 6pm-Circles 4 pm-Art Class 7 pm-Big Book 7 pm-OA	21 11am-Prayer/Share 7:15-Adult Ch 8:30-Bell Ch	22 7 am-AA 8:30am-Men's Brkfst	23 7 am-AA  Church office closes at noon.	24 7 am-AA  Christmas Eve Services at 6:30 pm, 9:00 pm, 11:00 pm
25 7 am-AA 10 am-Worship 3 pm-OA	26 7 am-AA  Church Office Is closed.	27 7 am-AA 7 pm-Big Book 7 pm-OA	28 7 am-AA 9 am-Presbyter	29 7 am-AA	30 7 am-AA	31 7 am-AA  New Year's Eve



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

300 School Street

Clarks Summit, PA 18411-1536

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### Calling all teachers!

The Wednesday Adulthood and Youth Christian Education Program (the WAY), offers classes for all ages every week. Christian Education is an important part of who we are and what we do — and you can be a part of it! Help us all to grow in Christ by volunteering to teach...at any grade level for any amount of time, you can lead our children and adults in learning and growth. Please prayerfully consider helping with this important ministry.

Contact Nancy Dennen at (570) 407-1037 for more information.



### Helpers Needed!

The W.A.Y. is looking for people to help with our meals. You are welcome to help once in a while, once a month, or whenever you are able!

#### You can help by:

Cooking or helping to cook a main dish, providing a salad, providing a dessert, helping with setup, or helping with cleanup.

If so, contact Nancy Dennen at (570) 407-1037.

