



The Spire



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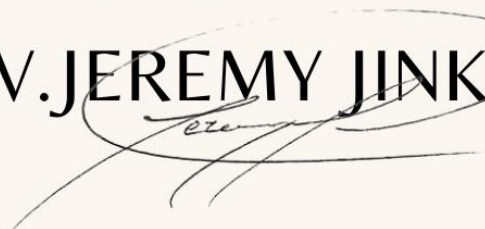
NOTE FROM JEREMY

Dear Friends,

This issue of The Spire gives a special focus, yes to the life of our church and what we are doing, but also to a central focus of our Christian faith. Our tradition is founded on anticipation and hope. What we have experienced in Jesus is the answer to this hope. In Advent, we wait for the First Light to break on the horizons of our lives, proving that God is with us in our need. In the season following the Epiphany, we get to experience the full glory of Jesus' ministry Shining Bright in the world. It is in his teaching and preaching, healing and miracles that we witness the glory of God's presence in the world and find the voice that says, "I want to follow this way of living." Lent puts us to the test. In Lent, we follow the hard path, turn inward, and search the Dark Night of the Soul where we come to rely on the promise that God has been with us always, even when we thought things were dark.

This is the pattern of Christian life and we invite you this winter to join us as we start this journey together.

-REV. JEREMY JINKINS



WHAT DO WE SING IN THE MUSIC OF ADVENT? -PAUL SANNER

WE SING OF INVITATION:

“O COME, O COME EMMANUEL, AND RANSOM CAPTIVE ISRAEL...”

WE SING OF WATCHFUL WAITING:

“LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YE MIGHTY GATES; BEHOLD THE KING OF GLORY WAITS...”

WE SING OF ANTICIPATION:

“O LORD, HOW SHALL I MEET YOU, HOW WELCOME YOU A-RIGHT?”

WE SING OF HOPE:

“COMFORT, COMFORT, NOW MY PEOPLE, TELL OF PEACE’ SO SAYS OUR GOD. COMFORT THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS MOURNING UNDER SORROW’S LOAD...”

WE SING OF EXCITEMENT

(THROUGH THE WORDS OF MARY’S MAGNIFICAT):

“MY SOUL CRIES OUT WITH A JOYFUL SHOUT THAT THE GOD OF MY HEART IS GREAT, AND MY SPIRIT SINGS OF THE WONDROUS THINGS THAT YOU BRING TO THE ONES WHO WAIT...MY HEART SHALL SING OF THE DAY YOU BRING. LET THE FIRES OF THE JUSTICE BURN. WIPE AWAY ALL TEARS, FOR THE DAWN DRAWS NEAR, AND THE WORLD IS ABOUT TO TURN.”

WE SING OF THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD’S PROMISE TO ALL:

“ON JORDAN’S BANK THE BAPTIST’S CRY ANNOUNCES THAT THE LORD IS NIGH... THEN CLEANSED BE EVERY LIFE FROM SIN; MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY FOR GOD WITHIN, AND LET US ALL OUR HEARTS PREPARE, FOR CHRIST TO COME AND ENTER THERE.”

WHY



MATTERS

-GORDANA HARRIS

ISAIAH WROTE THAT GOD SAID, "HERE AM I, HERE AM I." WHAT A WONDERFUL REMINDER THAT GOD IS EVERYWHERE, ALL THE TIME. OUR ADVENT SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEONS ARE A GREAT WAY TO SEE GOD IN ACTION.

I BELIEVE GOD IS SO HAPPY TO SEE US TOGETHER AS A CHURCH FAMILY AND ENJOY THE GIFTS HE HAS GIVEN US. I THINK HE IS THRILLED TO SEE US IN FELLOWSHIP SHARING OUR JOYS, PAINS, AND WONDERMENT WHILE NOURISHING OUR BODIES. HE COMMANDED US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND, AS MY MOTHER ALWAYS USED TO SAY, "FOOD IS LOVE."

OUR ADVENT SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEONS ARE ONE WAY TO PRAISE AND THANK GOD FOR HIS GIFTS AND RECOGNIZE THAT HE IS AMONG US ALWAYS. GETTING TOGETHER TO PREPARE MEALS, SET UP THE TABLES, AND SERVE OUR CONGREGANTS AND VISITORS IS A FORM OF FELLOWSHIP. SITTING DOWN WITH FRIENDS, OLD AND NEW, IS ANOTHER WAY WE ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S PRESENCE. AND, OF COURSE, CLEANING UP IS ALWAYS A REMINDER TO BE JOYOUSLY HUMBLE. WE ARE SO BLESSED THAT GOD GAVE US EACH OTHER TO NOURISH AND NURTURE.

I LOOK FORWARD TO MORE EVENTS WHERE WE CAN GATHER AROUND THE TABLE AND SHARE WITH EACH OTHER. I AM EXCITED FOR OUR COMMUNITY TO BE TOGETHER AGAIN THIS ADVENT SEASON FOR ANOTHER SOUP AND BREAD GATHERING!

Waiting for Jesus and Cookies

ADVENT IS A SEASON THAT HELPS US LEARN TO PRACTICE PATIENCE, A VIRTUE THAT EVERYONE CAN ALWAYS USE MORE OF. WHETHER WE ARE AN ADULT WAITING FOR A BREAK FROM OUR JOB DURING THE HOLIDAYS, OR KIDS WAITING FOR SANTA TO COME.

DURING THIS SEASON WE ALSO WAIT FOR THE COMING OF THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD. THAT LIGHT IS JESUS CHRIST, GOD INCARNATE, ENTERING THIS WORLD SO THAT WE MIGHT UNDERSTAND GOD MORE FULLY, FOR US TO KNOW THAT GOD UNDERSTANDS OUR LIVES, AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN.

MANY OF US HAVE TROUBLE WAITING, OR AT LEAST WAITING PATIENTLY. MAYBE YOU STRUGGLE WITH WAITING FOR BAKED TREATS TO COME OUT OF THE OVEN AND TO COOL DOWN ENOUGH TO EAT. AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, THOSE SUGARY CONCOCTIONS OFTEN TAKE THE SHAPE OF SPRITZ COOKIES, THOSE WONDERFULLY LIGHT BUT RICH COOKIES THAT COME IN EVERY SHAPE AND COLOR IMAGINABLE! FOR MANY IT ISN'T CHRISTMAS TIME WITHOUT A TIN OF SPRITZ COOKIES ON THE COUNTER.

MAKING THESE COOKIES AS A FAMILY IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO GET KIDS INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEASON. IT ALSO HELPS THEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE CAN LEARN TO WAIT PATIENTLY. IN THOSE TIMES OF WAITING (WHETHER FOR A FEW MINUTES OR FOR DAYS OR YEARS) JESUS IS THERE WITH US, HELPING US TO STAY CALM.

BELOW IS A RECIPE FOR SPRITZ COOKIES. DURING THIS ADVENT SEASON GET THE FAMILY TOGETHER AND MAKE A BATCH! AND WHILE YOU'RE WAITING FOR THEM TO COOK OR COOL, TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO READ A STORY ABOUT JESUS AND TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES WALKING ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS IN LUKE 24. AFTER YOU'VE FINISHED READING, HAVE YOUR CHILD (AND YOU!) "WALK" THEIR FINGERS AROUND THE FINGER LABYRINTH WE'VE INCLUDED HERE. WHEN THEY REACH THE CENTER, HAVE THEM PAUSE FOR A MOMENT AND THINK ABOUT HOW JESUS IS ALWAYS WITH THEM, WHATEVER THEY ARE DOING. THEN THEY CAN SLOWLY WALK THEIR FINGERS BACK OUT.

WE HOPE THAT YOU FIND LOTS OF WAYS TO PAUSE AND SPEND TIME AS A FAMILY DURING THIS ADVENT SEASON. PLEASE, MAKE SURE TO TAKE PICTURES AND VIDEOS OF YOUR COOKIE-MAKING AND LABYRINTH "WALKING" AND SHARE THEM WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY. WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT YOU DO!

INGREDIENTS

1 CUP (2 STICKS) BUTTER, ROOM TEMPERATURE | 3/4 CUP SUGAR | 2 EGG YOLKS
1 TEASPOON ALMOND EXTRACT | 1 TEASPOON CLEAR VANILLA EXTRACT
2 1/4 CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR | 1/2 TEASPOON SALT | HOLIDAY SPRINKLES
FOOD COLORING (OPTIONAL)

SPRITZ COOKIE RECIPE



DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cream butter and sugar together until lightened, about 3 minutes. Add egg yolks, almond extract, and vanilla. Beat until well incorporated. In a separate bowl, stir together flour and salt. Add to the butter-sugar mixture and beat until just combined, about 1 1/2 minutes.

Use your hands to combine the shaggy dough into a ball, and use some of the dough to fill a cookie press fitted with the pattern attachment you wish to use. (If you'd like to have multiple colored cookies, you can split your mixture into smaller balls and color them.)

Press the cookies onto ungreased baking sheets (light colored aluminum baking sheets are preferred over dark metal baking sheets). If you don't have a cookie press, you can form the dough into whatever shapes you'd like!

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, rotating halfway. The cookies should barely brown and maintain an off-white color. Immediately remove the cookies to a cooling rack, and allow to cool completely before decorating.

Christmas

CAROLS, COOKIES AND COCOA

“We just thought this would be the best way for our family to celebrate the upcoming Christmas holiday. Thank you for having us!”

These were the words that were spoken to me by the father and mother of two children visiting our church, for the very first time at our Christmas Carols, Cookies, and Cocoa event. They had seen we were gathering to sing, to eat, and to rejoice in the season, and for them, that was reason enough to walk through our doors.

Moments like these are hopeful for a pastor like me. It reminds me that church doesn't need to be difficult, it can be simple. Church isn't a place of isolation, but one of community and relationships. Church isn't a place of hurt, but rather a place where we can flourish.

We'll have our Christmas Carols, Cookies, and Cocoa event again this year on Sunday, December 10 immediately following the Birthday Party for Jesus- but I'm hopeful once again that maybe this year another family, another couple, another person, another beloved child of God can walk through these doors and experience the joy, love, and belonging that church is meant to give us this holiday season. -REV. MARCY RYAN



Birthday Party for Jesus



A Christmas Pageant is an event that many churches have, but it's almost guaranteed to look very different from one church to the next. Some have lots of singing or even dancing; some have live animals; some have a simple reading of the Christmas story while a few actors present the different parts of the story. It is a treasured pastime for many families.

This year, we will be approaching things a bit differently. On Sunday, Dec. 10 at 1:00 pm we will be throwing a birthday party for Jesus! It will be an afternoon filled with fun, fellowship, and stories.

We will have guest speaker and author Laura Sassi present a special story. Followed by a holiday movie presentation. We will then convene on the front lawn for Christmas Carols, Cookies and Cocoa

Longest Night SERVICE

12.21.23

ONE OF MY CLOSEST FRIENDS IN HIGH SCHOOL WAS DAVID. THAT WAS MANY YEARS AGO, BUT MY MEMORY OF DAVID IS THAT HE WAS EASY TO BE AROUND, ENJOYED LAUGHING AND HUMOR, WAS A TRUSTED CONFIDANT AND ACTIVE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL. HE WAS THE YOUNGEST SIBLING IN HIS BIRTH FAMILY, AND WHEN HE BECAME AN UNCLE FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE WAS PROFOUNDLY GLAD. DAVID WAS PART OF A BLENDED FAMILY, AND SOMETIMES TALKED ABOUT HARDER ASPECTS OF HIS LIFE, BUT HE SEEMED BASICALLY OK, AS OK AS ANYONE. WE DIDN'T STAY IN TOUCH THROUGH COLLEGE, BUT ABOUT A YEAR AFTER COLLEGE WAS COMPLETE FOR BOTH OF US, I LEARNED THAT HE WAS PROBABLY NOT "BASICALLY OK" WHEN I KNEW HIM, AS HE TOOK HIS OWN LIFE AT THAT TIME. ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE I HEARD THE NEWS OF HIS SUICIDE, MY PARENTS HAD TOLD ME THAT HE STOPPED BY THEIR HOUSE IN CASE I WAS HOME, TO SAY HELLO. I WAS NO LONGER LIVING THERE, AND DAVID DIDN'T LEAVE A WAY TO REACH HIM, SO WE DIDN'T CONNECT.

I'LL NEVER KNOW, BUT I LIKE TO THINK THAT IF DAVID AND I HAD SPOKEN BEFORE HE MADE HIS CHOICE, I MIGHT HAVE INVITED HIM TO WAIT ONE MORE DAY, AND MAYBE ANOTHER DAY AFTER THAT. MAYBE HE WOULD HAVE ACCEPTED THAT INVITATION AND PUT ENOUGH DAYS TOGETHER TO SEE THE LIFTING OF HIS BURDEN.

IT IS TRUE THAT SUICIDE-LEVEL DEPRESSION IS EXTREME, BUT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT ALMOST ALL OF US LIVE WITH EMOTIONAL PAIN TO SOME EXTENT AT DIFFERENT TIMES IN OUR LIVES. FOR SOME, THAT PAIN IS A CONSTANT AND CHALLENGING UNDERCURRENT OF DAILY LIFE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HOLIDAY TIMES CAN BRING CLOSER TO THE SURFACE UNDERCURRENTS OF PAIN.

AT PCW, WE'VE BEGUN A PRACTICE OF GATHERING FOR WORSHIP ON THE WINTER SOLSTICE, THE LONGEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR. WORSHIP IS MANY THINGS AT ALL TIMES, BUT IN THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE, YOU MIGHT ESPECIALLY FIND COMPASSION, HEALING AND RESTORATION.

WE OFFER A LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE TO FULFILL IN OUR COMMUNITY THE PROMISE OF WELCOME AND BELONGING. WE OFFER A LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE IN CASE YOU ARE TRYING TO PUT TOGETHER A FEW "JUST ONE MORE DAYS."

THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE IS FOR ANYONE AND EVERYONE, THOUGH. WE GATHER THIS NIGHT TO WORSHIP SIMPLY AND QUIETLY, THAT WE MAY SHARE TIME TOGETHER SET APART FROM THE FAST PACE OF THE SEASON, TO GIVE AND RECEIVE COMFORT, AND HOPEFULLY, TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE JOY TO BE FOUND IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST ENTERING OUR LIVES.

SEE YOU THERE. PEACE BE WITH YOU.

PAUL SANNER

Big Happenings in Family Ministry!

We've had some big things happening in the area of Family Ministry these past few months! Faith Formation and Youth Commissions have come together as one team, now called Family Ministry. We have been having a lot of fun working together to make sure that there are plenty of opportunities for families of all ages and sizes to spend time exploring and growing in faith together.

We've kicked off another year of Middle School and High School Fellowship; seen the return of Tuesday morning Breakfast Club; watched Sunday School continue to grow, and had many events for families like our Trunk-Or-Treat and Family Fun Day!

As we move into Advent and look towards the holidays, we know that schedules are full and busy. There are parties and visits to see Santa, and our worship services focus on the light of Christ coming into the world and dwelling with us. It's a very exciting time. But the time following Christmas, called Epiphany, is also full and exciting!

We continue to have our regular events for children, youth, and families, but we also throw in some new things as well. We will have the ski trip for our High School students, a tubing trip for all youth, Parents Afternoon Out, another Family Fun and Shrove Sunday event on Feb 11, and new small groups for parents beginning in the spring.

We want you to know that we are here to support you in the spiritual raising of your children, whether they are 3, 23, or 53, and want to make sure that you have all the resources that you need to grow in your own faith as well as helping your kids to grow in theirs. Spiritual growth and exploration don't just happen on Sundays or inside the walls of the church. It happens everywhere, and you are the best guide that your child has for their spiritual upbringing. Join us for any and all of our events, and let us know if there is a particular need that you and your family have.

A DEVOTION FOR THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR BOOKS IN STORES TODAY ARE “HOW TO” BOOKS. GIVEN OUR CONTEMPORARY TENDENCY TO WANT TO CONTROL OUR LIVES YOU MIGHT NOT BE SURPRISED. THE BIBLE, ON THE OTHER HAND, (AS THE SINGLE MOST POPULAR BOOK PUBLISHED WORLDWIDE), IS MORE THAN THAT. THE BIBLE TELLS OF GOD’S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE. IT PROVIDES US WITH GLIMPSES OF WHO GOD IS AND HOW OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM CHANGES WHO WE ARE. WITH THE BUSY NATURE OF CHRISTMAS BEHIND US, LET US TAKE TIME TO CONSIDER THE MEANING OF CHRIST’S BIRTH. PLEASE JOIN IN ON THIS 12-DAY SPIRITUAL WALK AS WE LET THE REALITY OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY “SINK IN”. THE READINGS TELL OF PEOPLE WHO ENCOUNTERED CHRIST, FROM HIS BIRTH TO BEYOND HIS RESURRECTION, AND HOW THEIR LIVES CHANGED BECAUSE OF HIM. AS YOU MOVE ALONG THE DAILY READINGS, CONTINUE TO ASK THE QUESTION “WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT CHRIST IS HERE AMONG US?”

-ALAN AND NANCY SMITH



DAY 1: MARY — LUKE 1: 30-33,38,46-49

WHAT THOUGHTS AWAKEN IN YOU OF CHRIST BREAKING FORTH INTO OUR LIVES?

DAY 2: THE SHEPHERDS — LUKE 2:8-20

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE GLORY OF CHRIST AROUND YOU?

DAY 3: THE THREE KINGS — MATTHEW 2:1-12

WHAT IN THIS STORY ENCOURAGES YOU TO BE MORE GENEROUS IN YOUR RESPONSE TO OTHERS?

DAY 4: SIMEON — LUKE 2:25-32

WHAT MIGHT FULFILL YOUR LIFE?

DAY 5: ANNA — LUKE 2: 36-38

FROM WHAT YOU ARE ENCOUNTERING TODAY, WHERE DO YOU FIND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?

DAY 6: JESUS AT THE TEMPLE — LUKE 2:41-51

MARY AND JOSEPH COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT JESUS IS MORE THAN 'THEIR' CHILD. HOW DOES THIS HELP YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?

DAY 7: WEDDING AT CANA — JOHN 2:1-11

WHO IN YOUR FAITH LIFE IS ENCOURAGING YOU TO ACT WITH THE GIFTS YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN?

DAY 8: JOHN THE BAPTIST — JOHN 1: 29-34

HOW DOES JOHN'S HUMILITY AS WELL AS HIS ACTIONS ENCOURAGE YOU TO RESPOND TO CHRIST'S CALL IN YOUR LIFE?

DAY 9: ANDREW AND PETER — JOHN 1:35-42

WHAT MIGHT YOU ENGAGE IN AS YOU CONSIDER THE DISCIPLES' RESPONSE TO MEETING JESUS?

DAY 10: NICODEMUS — JOHN 3:1-4

NICODEMUS IS PRESENTED WITH SOMETHING TO PONDER THAT IS BEYOND HIS TRADITIONAL SCOPE. WHAT CHALLENGE ARE YOU FACING THAT COULD MOVE YOU BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE?

DAY 11: MARY, MARTHA AND LAZARUS — JOHN 11: 20-27

HOW WOULD YOU ARTICULATE YOUR STATEMENT OF FAITH?

DAY 12: SAUL TO PAUL — ACTS 9: 17-20

WHAT CALL TO ACTION MIGHT CHRIST BE ENCOURAGING YOU TO TAKE?

UPON COMPLETING THE READINGS ASK YOURSELF "HOW DOES KNOWING WHO CHRIST IS CHANGE WHO YOU ARE?" AND "HOW DO YOU PLAN TO RESPOND TO CHRIST'S CALL AS THE YEAR BEGINS?"

#PCWCHRISTMAS

#PCWREFLECT

ENGAGEMENT MAKING CONNECTIONS

I AM PRIVILEGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF THE ENGAGEMENT & CONNECTION GROUP HERE AT PCW. ONE INTERESTING DISCUSSION TOPIC HAS BEEN “WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME MORE ‘CONNECTED’ TO ANOTHER PERSON” (WHETHER IN OR OUT OF CHURCH.)

IN AN ARTICLE ABOUT FRIENDSHIP BY DAVID BROOKS (NY TIMES), I WAS DRAWN TO A DISCUSSION ABOUT TIME: HOW LONG IT TAKES FOR FRIENDSHIP TO FULLY MANIFEST. A STUDY BY JEFFREY HALL (UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS) SUGGESTS THAT IT TAKES 45 HOURS “IN ANOTHER PERSON’S COMPANY” TO MOVE FROM ACQUAINTANCE TO FRIEND; 50 MORE HOURS TO BECOME “MEANINGFUL” FRIENDS, AND THEN ANOTHER 100 HOURS TO BECOME “CLOSE” FRIENDS. THAT IS 195 HOURS, TO MOVE FROM ACQUAINTANCE TO CLOSE FRIEND.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER? ONLY TO REMIND US THAT BEING AN “ENGAGING” CHURCH IS REALLY A LIFELONG COMMITMENT, FROM ALL OF US. RELATIONSHIPS TAKE TIME. SOMEONE ONCE OPINED “YOU CAN’T HURRY LOVE”. STRONG RELATIONSHIPS TAKE MORE TIME.

I’M GRATEFUL FOR ALL OF THE CONNECTIONS THAT I’VE MADE SO FAR AT PCW. I’M GLAD I’VE BEEN GIVEN THE TIME AND SPACE TO GET TO KNOW MANY OF YOU. I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING ON THIS PATH TOGETHER, HELPING EACH OTHER, ALONG WITH PEOPLE WE DON’T YET KNOW, FIND “HOME” IN OUR CONGREGATION.

-PAUL SANNER

EPIPHANY – ACTIVE FAITH

IN ADVENT, WE ANTICIPATE THE COMING OF CHRIST'S LIGHT INTO THE WORLD, DURING EPIPHANY, WE GET TO CELEBRATE THAT IT IS HERE! WE EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO EXPERIENCE THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN OUR WORLD, NOW AND FOREVER.

OUR FAITH IS MULTI-FACETED AND A FAITH OF ACTION. WE PRAY AND OFFER PRAISE, TEACH AND LEARN, NURTURE AND CARE, GIVE AND RECEIVE COMFORT, AND LOOK BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH BUILDING TO SEE WHERE WE MIGHT OFFER OUR HANDS AND MATERIAL RESOURCES TO MAKE SOMETHING BETTER FOR SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE.

I'M BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THAT DISCIPLESHIP ISN'T A RESTRICTED CLUB, LIMITED TO ONLY THOSE WHO BROKE BREAD WITH JESUS AT THE LAST SUPPER. JESUS CALLS US, EVEN TODAY (ESPECIALLY TODAY) TO FOLLOW HIM, BY ACTIVELY LIVING OUT THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS – LOVING GOD AND LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS. REMEMBERING, OF COURSE, THAT EVERYONE IS OUR NEIGHBOR.

I WAS MOVED BY ONE OF PASTOR MARCY'S INTRODUCTIONS TO THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE. SHE REFERRED TO THE WORDS OF POET DAVID WHYTE, RELATING THE STORY OF A CONVERSATION WITH HIS ELDERLY SISTER, ABOUT ANY REGRETS SHE MIGHT HAVE IN HER LIFE. THE SISTER SAID "THE ONLY REGRET I HAVE IS THE TIMES I RESISTED BEING GENEROUS TO OTHERS, THE TIMES I RESISTED OFFERING HELP WHEN I KNEW I COULD HELP, OFFERING MONEY WHEN I KNEW I HAD THE MONEY TO DO SO, OFFERING A COMPASSIONATE LOVING WORD WHEN IT WAS ASKED FOR."

OUR NATURAL STATE IS TO BE IN COMMUNION WITH EACH OTHER. FOR REASONS BEST LEFT TO BIBLE STUDY AND PREACHING, THAT IS NOT THE HUMAN CONDITION, AT LEAST MOST OF THE TIME. WHEN WE FOLLOW JESUS, AND LIVE AN ACTIVE, HELPING, GENEROUS FAITH, WE MOVE EVER CLOSER TO LIVING IN SHALOM. LET'S DO THAT. WE WON'T REGRET IT.

-PAUL SANNER

WHY I SAID YES TO BEING A PART OF A SMALL GROUP

I HAVE A LOT GOING ON WITH THREE SMALL CHILDREN AND A CAREER. HOWEVER, I HAVE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS THAT WHEN I MAKE MY SPIRITUAL FITNESS A PRIORITY, I AM BETTER ABLE TO MANAGE ALL OF THOSE THINGS. I ALSO SAID YES BECAUSE WE WERE CREATED FOR FELLOWSHIP AND I AM HAPPIER WHEN I HAVE IT IN MY LIFE.

THERE IS A REASON WHY WE FEEL SO ENERGIZED AND GOOD AFTER DEEP AND MEANINGFUL CONNECTION WITH ONE ANOTHER. IT FEEDS OUR SOULS IN A WAY THAT ISOLATING AND OR SCROLLING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA SIMPLY CAN'T. LASTLY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, I SAID YES BECAUSE I WANT TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE FOR MY FAMILY. I HAVE COMMITTED TO CARVE OUT TIME WHERE I STUDY THE WORD, PRAY AND MEDITATE WITH MY FELLOW CHRISTIANS.

MY CHILDREN AND MY HUSBAND SEE THE BENEFITS OF THIS BECAUSE IN DOING SO, I AM MUCH MORE LIKELY TO BEAR THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT (LOVE, JOY, PATIENCE, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL) THAT MY FAMILY SO DESPERATELY NEEDS FROM ME. PERHAPS ONE DAY MY GIRLS WILL JOIN A SMALL GROUP OF THEIR OWN.

-LAYNA SANDERS

Why PW Circles?

-KATE TKAC

In May 2022, Marcy approached me to see if I would be interested in joining a circle for young moms. Without hesitation, I said “yes!” I knew this would be an easy way to meet other moms in town, with children similar in age to mine, who also viewed PCW as an important influence in their family’s lives.

We all instantly connected and have since been meeting monthly. Our children have also been able to make seamless friendships with one another: whether it be learning together at Sunday School or running into one another on the playground. It is amazing to be part of a group of women who support one another.

We come together to share joys (we have celebrated three pregnancies in the group!), for comfort, and to pray. I encourage everyone to also say “yes” when approached with the opportunity to join a circle as I know it will bring as much joy to your lives as it has for me and my family.



LEGACY CIRCLE INITIATIVE

-BILL TITTLE

OUR CHURCH HAS BEEN THE RECIPIENT OF PLANNED GIFTS FOR MANY YEARS. THE LAST INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE LEGACY GIFTS WAS OVER FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, SO WE FELT IT WAS TIME TO BRING THE ISSUE TO THE ATTENTION OF OUR MEMBERS. WE FIRST DECIDED TO FOCUS ON OLDER MEMBERS FIRST. WE GATHERED TOGETHER EARLIER THIS FALL TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION, "WHAT DO I WANT MY LEGACY TO BE AND TO LIVE ON AFTER I AM NO LONGER HERE?" IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, THERE WILL BE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT OPTIONS, FINANCIAL VEHICLES, AND LEGAL ISSUES FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO INCLUDE PCW AS PART OF THEIR LEGACY.

PCW IS A VERY RELEVANT INSTITUTION FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE:

- **YOUTH - WHO AM I? WHO DO I WANT TO BE? WHAT ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS?**
- **YOUNG ADULTS - CAREER? MARRIAGE? KIDS? WHO DO I WANT AS FRIENDS?**
- **MIDDLE AGE - LIMITS OF MY CAREER; WHAT GIVE MY LIFE VALUE? IS THIS ALL THERE IS?**
- **RETIREMENT - WHAT'S NEXT? IS THIS ALL THERE IS?**

THROUGHOUT MY LIFE I FOUND MANY OF THE PEOPLE I WANTED TO SPEND TIME WITH, WHO I COULD TALK TO AND TRUST, AT CHURCH. THE OLDER I GET, THE MORE I APPRECIATE ALL THE THINGS PCW DOES AND REPRESENTS.

WHERE ELSE ARE ALL WELCOME AND ACCEPTED FOR WHO THEY ARE. PCW IS NOT PERFECT, BUT ITS VISION AND MISSION IS NOBLE. I CAN THINK OF FEW OTHER INSTITUTIONS BETTER ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAJOR CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME. WE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE HEALING FROM DIVISIONS IN OUR POLITICS, OUR FAMILIES, AND OUR COMMUNITY.

STAY TUNED FOR ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN MORE. ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS CAN BE DIRECTED TO BILL TITTLE (WLTITTLE@GMAIL.COM).

JINGLE BELLS... OR JUST THE BELL

WINTER, SNOW, THE ONE-HORSE OPEN SLEIGH; CAN YOU HEAR THE BELLS ON THE HARNESSSES?
DURING YULE TIDE, WE SING "DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH... THAT FAMILIAR CHOIR ANTHEM.
BUT I DIGRESS....

IN THE LAST STORY, YOU MAY HAVE NOTED "THAT PESKY NOISEMAKER THAT WARNED OF THE APPROACHING BRITISH TROOPS." IN RESPONSE THE TOWN'S FOLK WOULD RETREAT TO THE MOUNTAIN. THE ACCOUNT OF REV. BENJAMIN WOODRUFF RECALLS THAT HE WITNESSED THE TOWN 'OVER-RUN WITH RED COATS ON THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 1777."

ONE ACCOUNT TELLS US THAT THE BELL WAS HANGING IN A TREE AT ONE POINT BUT BY THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION IT MAY HAVE BEEN IN A BELFRY. ON JUNE 23, 1780, AS THE BRITISH WERE RETREATING TO STATEN ISLAND, THE BELL - OUR BELL - WAS THROWN FROM THE BELFRY AND ORDERED CARRIED OFF AND AWAY TO THE BRITISH STRONGHOLD.

A VALUABLE COMMODITY DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR WAS SUGAR. IT WAS VALUABLE ENOUGH TO HAVE A SECURE STOREHOUSE FOR IT, ACTUALLY A CLOSELY GUARDED FORTRESS. SUGAR'S SCARCE, IT'S LOCKED UP, YOU CAN'T GET AT IT EASILY. THE FORTRESS WAS SO SECURE THAT IT COULD BE USED AS A GOOD PRISON, AND IT WAS.

ONE PRISONER TAKEN BY THE BRITISH WAS A WESTFIELD, WILLIAM CLARK, A PRIVATE IN THE ESSEX COUNTY MILITIA (YES, ESSEX COUNTY MILITIA - UNION COUNTY WASN'T FORMED OUT OF ESSEX COUNTY UNTIL 1857, A FULL EIGHT DECADES LATER.) PRIVATE CLARK WAS INCARCERATED IN THE SUGAR HOUSE. WHILE HE WAS THERE, FROM HIS PRISON WINDOW HE HEARD THE BELL -A FAMILIAR SOUND FROM HIS HOME CHURCH.

AFTER THE END OF HOSTILITIES, THE BELL WAS RETURNED TO THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. LORE HAS IT THAT IT WAS RUNG SO HARD AND FOR SO LONG THAT IT CRACKED. IT WAS RECAST IN 1847 USING THE ORIGINAL BELL MATERIAL.

TODAY AT HANGS IN THE BELL CHAMBER OF THE STEEPLE, AND IS THERE TO ANNOUNCE THE COMING WORSHIP SERVICE. YES, WE DO RING IT OCCASIONALLY, BUT PROBABLY NOT FREQUENTLY ENOUGH.

THE ARCHIVIST



CALMING SPIRITUAL EXERCISE: FINGER LABYRINTH

DIRECTIONS:

QUIET YOUR MIND, BREATHING DEEPLY IN AND OUT. THEN, WITH YOUR NON-DOMINANT HAND, THAT IS THE HAND THAT YOU DON'T USE TO WRITE OR DRAW, FOLLOW THE PATH, IMAGINING JESUS WITH YOU. KEEP FOLLOWING, FOCUSING ON THE MOVEMENT OF YOUR FINGER ALL THE WAY INTO THE MIDDLE. WHEN YOU GET THERE, STAY A LITTLE. IMAGINE JESUS WITH YOU AND SEE IF HE SAYS ANYTHING TO YOU.



PCW YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Fall Calendar

FALL 2023 ADVISORS



COURTNEY NEMEČ



ALLIE COOK



EMILY PARKINSON



TOM PARKINSON

3
DEC

HIGH SCHOOL FELLOWSHIP
GLOW PARTY
Glow sticks, Glow face paint

4:00PM-5:30PM

10
DEC

HIGH SCHOOL FELLOWSHIP
SPIRIT OF GIVING
Ornament Exchange

4:00PM-5:30PM

17
DEC

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL FELLOWSHIP
CHRISTMAS PARTY
Kick the Santa, Cookies & Hot Cocoa

4:00PM-5:30PM



FIRST LIGHT

WOMENS RETREAT 2024

FAITH WALKING

JAN 26-28

**HONOR'S HAVEN
RETREAT CENTER**

LOCATED IN:

ELLENVILLE, NY

Deposit Due (12/1)

Balance Due (1/10/24)

**SCAN TO
REGISTER**



GUEST SPEAKER

REV. DR. SHERRI MEYER-VEEN



 THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
WESTFIELD

LIKE - FOLLOW - STREAM



WESTFIELDPC.ORG

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