

Pastor's *helper*

SALEM EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH, HELLERS | DECEMBER 2023

Share the Good News of Christ

—A Message from Pastor Bruce Tully

My Friends:

You have no idea how many people your life may have impacted in a short space of time until you come down with Covid! All of a sudden you start thinking, “who have I been with over the past five days or so?” It can be a bit overwhelming. Take it to the next level; with whom have THEY been in contact since you were with them? It can encompass a much greater number than you might imagine.

Throughout this season our attention is to be focused on the coming Christ. In the first event, over 2,000 years ago, the Jews were expecting a Messiah, the Chosen One of God. Since the birth, life, and death of Jesus the Christ, our outlook has shifted. We now look

forward to the returning Christ! Let's see what this has to do with a Covid outbreak!

Have you ever considered how many people your life touches on a daily basis? Whether it is through intimate knowledge of family or friends, a passing friendship, an acquaintanceship, or just in passing, there are likely dozens, if not hundreds, of people who are touched in some way by your life, each day. As you realize that Jesus had come to save a people to Himself, and that God sent Him specifically to die for our sins, there is a stark realization that this is a gift—a gift that must be shared.

Covid is hardly a gift, and yet we share it! We have the Gospel, and rarely share it. We meet the same people each day. Wouldn't it be more exciting

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For unto you is
born this day
in the city of David a
Saviour
which is
Christ the Lord.
— Luke 2:11

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to know that you have in some way shared the love of God with each of them? Maybe by a kind word, a good deed, a well-placed sentiment, or a light touch on the shoulder that lets them know you care... the love of God can shine through you even when you are not specifically thinking about it. The love of God is to be so much a vital part of your spirit that you exude love toward others as He has toward you.

There is a difference, and every metaphor breaks down somewhere along the line. I hope and pray that you do not deliberately go out to share a nasty virus. But I certainly DO hope that your constant attention to Christ in waiting for His return may send you out to share the Gospel. The Covid virus can make life miserable and for some, even bring an end to it. But the Gospel of Christ brings joy and peace to the soul, and eternity to the life of the believer.

As Advent passes and Christmas shows up sooner than you expect, remember the gift that God has given to you. Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, was given that you might have life and have it in abundance! It is the great gift! It is not meant to be hoarded or kept secret. Go out and make contact with others. Share the Good News of Christ and the love of God. This is what the season is about. Unlike Covid, the Gospel cannot and will not harm anyone! So be a blessing.

Blessings,

Pastor Bruce

**THE WORD
BECAME FLESH**

Salem Evangelical Reformed Church, Hellers

2555 Horseshoe Rd. | Lancaster PA 17601

717-656-9249

Bruce E. Tully, Pastor | 717-413-8417

Email: pastor@salemhellers.com

Carolyn McLain, Music Director

Email: musicdirector@salemhellers.com

Gail Banz, Office Administrator

Email: info@salemhellers.com

George Cooper, Consistory President | 717-330-0148

Consistory: George Cooper, President; Harry Teigland,
Vice President; Ron Nickel, Treasurer; Merv Bare; Ragen Burns;
Chuck Hanna; Marie Peazzoni; Margaret Sensenig;
Pastor Bruce Tully

www.salemhellers.com; www.facebook.com/salemhellers

December Birthdays

Skip Reynolds..... December 2
Carolyn Lorah..... December 4
John Swinehart..... December 12
Judy Wenger..... December 19
Sandi Moffett..... December 20
Gail Huber..... December 27
Bob Geist..... December 29

December Anniversary

Antoni & Lorin Wortel
December 31, 1981—42 years

Grace Notes

~ FROM CAROLYN MCLAIN , MUSIC DIRECTOR

“It’s Christmastime — Why are we singing these weird-sounding hymns I hardly know?”

“Advent hymns...Christmas hymns
— What’s the big difference?”

“Aren’t they all just Christmas songs?”

Good questions all! According to the church liturgical calendar, Advent is the first season of the church liturgical year. It includes the four Sundays before Christmas, usually beginning on the Sunday that falls on or nearest to November 30.

Fun Fact: Advent often begins during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, but not this year! The first Sunday in Advent 2023 is December 3, and the fourth and final Sunday of Advent falls right on December 24, Christmas Eve.

The term “Advent” comes from the Latin word “adventus,” which means “coming.” It is the time each year when we look forward to the coming birth of Jesus. These four weeks are an opportunity to wait ... and to anticipate celebrating the birth of our Savior.

The Old Testament Scriptures are full of prophecies that tell of the coming of the Messiah:

Isaiah 9:6: For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 7:14: Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

God’s people waited for lifetimes and generations for this promise to be fulfilled! This sense of longing is what we, too, can experience

each December as we look forward to celebrating Jesus’ birth. There’s value in this anticipation, and the experience of waiting prepares our hearts for the joyful celebration of Christmas.

So why do Advent hymns sound sad? It’s true; several of them are written in minor keys, but those more somber sounding melodies help to convey and express the longing for our Savior.

Why are the words a bit challenging to understand? The texts of many Advent hymns are rooted in Scripture and some date back more than 1,000 years! We shouldn’t view them as outdated or irrelevant, but instead let’s consider the bond we share with Christians who have been singing these great hymns for more than a millennium!

Please plan to come to our Advent Celebration on December 3 at 3:00 p.m. Our choir and musicians will feature wonderful arrangements of Advent hymns and songs. Members of our congregation will read Scripture passages that also point to God’s promise of salvation through His Son.

Our new hymnal, Hymns of Grace, includes a wonderful selection of Advent hymns, many of which may be new to you. We will sing some of them in our worship services this December, and I hope you’ll be blessed by the beautiful expressions of the deep longing we have for a Savior.

Wishing you a blessed Advent season, and a joyful Christmas!

—Carolyn



CONSISTORY MINUTES - November 14, 2023

1. Prayer—Chuck

2. Devotional George: Prayer, the Soul's sincere desire.

3. Roll call: Ron Nickel, George Cooper, Marie Peazzoni, Margaret Sensenig, Harry Teigland, Merv Bare, Chuck Hanna and Pastor Tully. Ragen Burns Absent.

4. President's Report: Tacit approval of October's minutes was made. No corrections.

1. The Property Committee is requesting to terminate Ragen's credit card (which he has already returned to the office) and create a new credit card in Caryn's name for the same credit limit that Ragen had for property use. Agreed.
2. Affidavit, that no audio recording via the security system will be done, to be signed by all persons who have access to the security system. Thus, we will abide by PA law.
3. Two new Deacons, Rey Rover and Patrick Tully and one new Elder, Chuck Hanna have been approved by Consistory.
4. Voting in of Consistory for 2024 next Sunday
5. Discussed the use of the Security System being used as Surveillance when the building is not being used.
6. Election of officers for 2024 Consistory on December 10.

5. Treasurer's Report:

October Financial Report approved unanimously.

6. Pastor's Report:

- Oct 14: attended the wedding of Laura Gribble.
- Oct 15: Harvest Home gathered up during worship
- Oct 16: Missions meeting
- Oct 17: CVM Bible study; Memorial Committee
- Oct 18: Prayer meeting; Special property meeting
- Oct 22: set up for bazaar; Dinner in Cowan Hall with the Ebys
- Oct 23: Worship committee meeting; 300th Anniversary committee
- Oct 26: morning meeting with a potential member; Afternoon meeting with another potential member
- Oct 28: Missions bazaar
- Oct 29: Introduced new members during worship; Informal budget meeting
- Oct 30: Met with Rosene Burns re: Bob's funeral service
- Nov 5: Memorial Sunday; celebrated eleven members who passed on this year; Added one more member during worship.
- Nov 11: Gave the prayer at the Leola Veterans Day Breakfast; Funeral of Bob Burns
I will be finishing up the brief series on worship on the 26th. We then begin the four Sundays of Advent, with our focus on hope, joy, love, and peace.

7. Reports of Ministries

A. Worship Team

1. Working on Advent and special services
2. Will begin adding some new elements to Worship

8. Committee Reports

- A. Property:** Attending: Skip Reynolds, Caryn, Mervin Bare, Patrick Tully, Harry Teigland, Dave Andrews
Opening Devotional and Prayer: Harry Teigland gave a brief devotional emphasizing the importance of Matthew 6:12 – forgiving as we have been forgiven – followed by prayer.

Property Committee Topics:

Summary of the reorganization of the property committee with individual assignments for specific areas of oversight in an effort to more evenly distribute responsibilities:

- EXTERIOR – Harry Teigland, Mervin Bare and Nevin Huber
ROOFING and FLASHING, GUTTERS and DOWN SPOUTS, BRICK, SIDING, MAJOR PAINTING, EXTERIOR DOORS and WINDOWS, INSURANCE, TRASH HAULING.

Consistory Minutes Continued

- INTERIOR – Caryn – PAINTING, FLOORING, CEILINGS, WALLS, FURNISHINGS, JANITORIAL, PEST CONTROL, EMERGENCY CLEANUP
- MECHANICAL – Jack Yoder & Patrick Tully - HVAC, PLUMBING, ELECTRICAL, APPLIANCES, WATER SOFTENER, ELEVATOR.
- ELECTRONICS – Dave Andrews - SECURITY SYSTEM, CLOSED CIRCUIT SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM, AUDIO/VISUAL SYSTEM, CARILION SYSTEM, DIGITAL SIGN.
- OUTDOOR/LANDSCAPING – Caryn & Scott Dearolf – MOWING, SNOW REMOVAL, TREES AND FLOWERS, GENERAL CEMETERY UPKEEP.
- CEMETERY – Levi King will continue until he gives us the word. – COORDINATING DEEDS WITH GAIL, LOCATING BURIAL PLOTS FOR EXCAVATION, ENSURING PROPER CLOSURE, COLLECTING EXPIRED FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS AND REMEMBRANCES.

Review of Old Business items as outlined in the 11/7/23 agenda.

- Landscaping expenses YTD are \$6,200 with approximately another \$1,000 that will be needed next year (and in next year's budget) to complete the job.
- There are a number of additional items that need to be disposed of to make room for ministry needs.

Review of New Business items as outlined in the 11/7/23 agenda.

- A motion was passed to allow committee members to make purchases of needed items up to \$500. Purchases above that require committee approval. Skip distributed copies of the church's tax exemption certificate.
- Due to James Baker's decision to step away from this task, a new cleaning service has been hired. The new cleaning resource is anticipated to be approximately \$250 per week
- The purchase of a new backpack vacuum system to make it possible to efficiently clean window sills, pews, tables, etc. plus floors was approved at a cost of \$560.
- Esco has completed an update on the alarm system.
- The committee approved of adding a changing table to the lower level "elevator" bathroom which is ADA Compliant and it will be designated as Unisex rather than as a Men's Room. The smaller restroom will be similarly designated and used as "overflow."
- Caryn will also follow-up with a request to Gail for a couple signs in an attempt to prevent user-induced plumbing issues in the lower stairwell Ladies Room.
- The committee approved of removing one of the pews and an unused desk from the Narthex to make room for some other furnishings (rocking chair, other chairs) for young mothers.

Future Projects

- The committee will be revisiting and updating the Book of Procedures as it relates to Property details with a special focus on the cemetery.

B. Memorial

Special service remembering those who passed away in the last year. Good attendance.

C. Missions Committee

- Harvest Home: netted 260 lbs. of food and over \$600 in cash gifts.
- Income from Bazaar not completed, but will be used for local charity.
- Christmas gift "tree" presents will be \$50 gift certificates.
- Last Community meal will be this month. We will not participate in the future due to changes made that causes it to be less "community."
- The Activities Committee is coming to life again. Wait for announcement in December. (Not actually part of Missions. We'll find a better place next time.)

D. Membership Care

Marie continues to call and keep in touch with our sick and shut-ins.

E. Fellowship with All Saints

Thanks for their help in setting up for the Bazaar. They are doing a much better job of closing the building and we are thankful.

9. Old Business

- A. No action has taken place regarding the picture of Jesus that is to be removed.
- B. No action has taken place regarding the removal of the security monitor from the sanctuary.

10. New Business

Consistory and Staff Christmas Party to be held in Cowan Hall on December 12.

11. Closing Prayer

Prayer items: Thanks for the progress we are making, new members, and for guidance for issues that still need to be addressed.

Minutes submitted by George Cooper, acting Secretary

DECEMBER *Giving*
at a
glance

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Cemetery | \$260.00 |
| Current | \$10,419.00 |
| Energy Needs | \$10.00 |
| Improvement | \$580.00 |
| Lay Life | \$813.51 |
| Loose Plate | \$995.00 |
| Missions Fund Raising | \$998.00 |

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| Memorial | \$50.00 |
| Missions | \$765.00 |
| Perpetual Care | \$900.00 |
| Rent | \$2,820.00 |
| Building Repairs | \$151.56 |
| Sunday School | \$20.00 |

**Heavenly
Humor**

I have an inferiority complex, but it's not a very good one.
I told my doctor that I broke my arm in two places. He told me to stop going to those places.
I was wondering why the baseball kept getting bigger and bigger, and then it hit me.
My teachers told me I'd never amount to much because I procrastinate. I told them, "Just you wait!"
I ordered a chicken and an egg from Amazon. I'll let you know which comes first.
I went to the doctor with a suspicious-looking mole. He told me they all look that way and I should have left it in the garden.
Why is a swordfish's nose 11 inches long? Because if it were 12 inches, it would be a foot.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



We invite you to join us as we joyfully welcome the Advent Season together. The Salem Helleners' Choir and Musicians will lead us in a service of musical praise, Scripture, and congregational singing that foretells the birth of Christ. The celebration will conclude with our annual tree lighting, carols around the tree, and a dessert reception.

Instead of the community meal in December, we will be gathering in Cowan Hall for a game night Friday, December 8, 2023 at 6:00 PM. Bring your favorite board game or two along with children, grandchildren, or a friend for an evening of fun

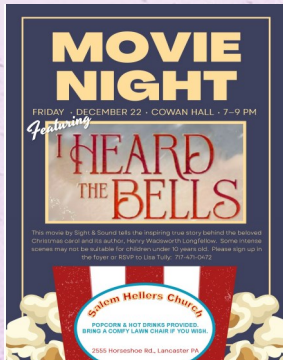
and fellowship! Hot dogs, drinks and popcorn will be provided; you are welcome to bring a side dish or dessert to share. Please sign up in the foyer if you can come or RSVP Lisa. If you need transportation, please contact Pastor Bruce.



You are invited to come to a Family Movie Night on Friday, December 22, in Cowan Hall from 7-9 PM. We will be showing Sight and Sound's *I Heard the Bells*, the inspiring true story behind the beloved Christmas carol and its author, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Popcorn and a hot beverage will be provided. Feel free to bring a comfy lawn chair.

Some intense scenes may not be suitable for children under 10 years old. Parents may want to read the review by Focus on the Family on their movie review site, Pluggedin.com: <https://www.pluggedin.com/movie-reviews/i-heard-the-bells-2022/>

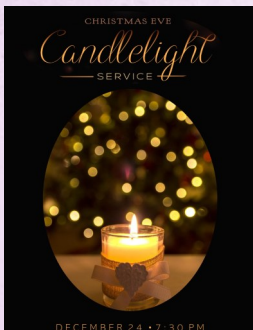
Please sign up in the foyer if you plan to come, or RSVP to Lisa.



If you wish to order poinsettias in memory or in honor of your loved ones, please fill out the poinsettia order form and submit it with payment to the church office by no later than December 10.



On the fourth Sunday of Advent, December 24 at 9:25 a.m., plan to worship with us in joyful song and with a Bible message on Sunday morning, during this "day before Christmas" service. Then plan to be back that evening for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7:30 p.m., a cherished, traditional service, which symbolizes the light of Christ coming into the darkness of the world. All are welcome!



The January issue of *Pastor's Helper* will be combined with February's edition and will come out in February.



CVCCS is still in need of winter coats as well as many other items. For a complete list of their needs, please check their website: <https://cvccs.org>. Thanks!

If you have any final updates for the directory or you would still like to be included in the 2024 directory, please contact Gail by December 10. Thank you.



DECEMBER 2023

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|---|-------------------------------|---|--|
|  | <p><i>And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.</i></p> <p>Luke 1:14</p> | | | | | 2 10:00 am Choir & Luncheon 1:00 pm Decorate |
| | | | | | 1 | |
| 3 - 9:25 am Worship; 10:45 am Sunday School & Children's Choir— 3:00 Advent Celebration | 4 | 5 7:00 p.m. Property | 6 6:15 PM Evening Prayer | 7 6:30 PM Choir | 8 Game Night 6:00 p.m. | 9 |
| 10 -9:25 am Worship; 10:45 am Sunday School Poinsettia Order Due | 11 | 12 6:00 pm Consistory Dinner in Cowan Hall | 13 6:15 PM Evening Prayer | 14 6:30 PM Choir | 15 | 16 Private Family Event 2-7 in Cowan Hall |
| 17 9:25 am Worship; 10:45 am Sunday School | 18 6:30 p.m. Missions | 19 | 20 6:15 PM Evening Prayer | 21 6:30 PM Choir | 22 Movie Night 7:00 p.m. | 23 |
| 24 - 9:25 am Worship; 10:45 am Sun. School 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service | 25 Christmas Day  | 26 | 27 6:15 PM Evening Prayer | 28 | 29 | 30  |