Saints Alive!

Volume 15, Issue 9
December 2017
"Friends in Christ, Serving Together with Love"

<u>The church office will be closed</u> on
Monday, December 25,
Tuesday, December 26
and on Monday, January 1.

ALPC Apparel

After much interest, we have decided to reopen the links to purchase ALPC apparel. The link will be live until January 1st at midnight. Purchase your apparel now!
ALPC Youth Ministry Apparel link: https://www.bonfire.com/alpc-youth-apparel/
ALPC Apparel link: https://www.bonfire.com/alpc-apparel/

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 28, 2018 in the Sanctuary

The purpose of the meeting is

- to vote on the Pastor's "terms of call"
- to elect Elders, Deacons and a Trustee
- to elect the 2018/2019 Nominating Committee.
- to review the reports of all the committees
- To review the 2017 Annual Report

Activities and refreshments are planned for the children during the meeting so that parents can be present at this very important meeting in the life of our church.

Avon Lake Presbyterian Church
Mission Statement

In awe, we Receive God's Grace and Gospel.
In gratitude, we Respond with Worship and Servanthood.
In love, we Represent Jesus Christ
as we minister to transform lives
in family, community, and the world.

FROM THE PASTOR/ Charlie Swartz

Dear Friends,

I wish you could work in a church the week before Christmas. I wish you could have the duty and pleasure to use all your creative energy to explain to others in a public setting the meaning of Christmas. When you need to preach a sermon on Christmas, you take seriously the nativity story like you never would otherwise. As your friends are spending their vocational hours solving engineering problems, teaching students, building homes - which are all excellent things to do - you come to work in order to think about God and how to share His love at Christmas. Christmas is a wonderful time to serve as a pastor. We receive double blessings as we both experience the season and explain the mystery.

Do you know how many kids came up for the "children's sermon" last Sunday? Fifteen! That is so exciting. Lee is all agog as she works with the children for the pageant on Christmas Eve worship in the morning. I cannot wait to enjoy our little angels as they do their impressions of shepherds, wise women (all girls!), Mary and Joseph, and yes, even angels! It doesn't get any better than this. I sure hope you can come to worship Christmas Eve morning. You won't want to miss out on what will be unscripted fun in the midst of scripted drama.

Last night's session meeting was a fine orchestration of the Holy Spirit. We heard from Marcy, our treasurer, that we as a church are meeting our goal of ending the year strong financially. That is remarkable and has taken the involvement of all of us to turn our financial picture around. Dan reported that our pledges for 2018 are on par with last year's and he hopes we will exceed them when we all turn in our pledges. CE is continuing to insure that our preschool brings the Christian Faith into the experience in ways that are age appropriate, encouraging and loving. The Session is considering an improved charter for our preschool that would put down in words the positive changes we have been making over the last year or two.

What do you think God's mission is for our church? We know God has things He wants done in the Avon Lake area. What is our part in His plans? That is what we will be asking in 2018 in our renewal process. It will be playful, serious community building stuff. You are going to love it.

Merry Christmas! Charlie
"Friends in Christ, Serving Together With Love"

Session

Session Highlights November-December

* The variance for the front sign was approved and installation should be completed by early 2018.

* Marcy Uhl, Treasurer, reported that we are reaching our goal to be in the black by year's end.

* The Cornerstone preschool charter revision was discussed.

* Forty one people were removed from the rolls.

Kathy Navarro
Clerk of Session

Evangelism

The Evangelism Committee is thrilled to welcome three new families who joined the ALPC family on October 29th this fall.

Abby and Josh Birmingham live at 34136 Jewel Circle in North Ridgeville with their son Jonny, a 10 month old little boy with brilliant blue eyes.

Ralph Kugel can be seen on Sunday mornings sitting in the pew with his beautiful daughter, Reagan, who enjoys Charlie's children's sermons and the C.E. program that follows. They live with their wife and mother, Ann Marie, at 379 Cascade Ct. in Avon Lake.

Michelle Zuehlke also enjoys the company of her lovely children, Ariana who is 7, and Nathaniel who is 2. Nathaniel is the little boy who exhibits such joy while following Miss Lee to his Sunday school program. They live at 2506 Aqua Marine Blvd. in Avon Lake with their husband and father, Matthew. Matthew is a retired Presbyterian Pastor. His last call was at Independence Presbyterian Church and as a pastor he is a member of the Presbytery and therefore not able to be a member of a specific church.

We are really excited to have them aboard and hope you will all be sure to welcome them! Their pictures are on the bulletin board in the foyer to help with identification.

Respectfully submitted by Arlene Strauch on behalf of the Evangelism Committee.

Healing Prayer Ministry

Matthew 8:5-10 – *"When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him and saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress.' And he said to him, 'I will come and cure him.' The centurion answered, 'Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go", and he goes, and to another, "Come", and he comes, and to my slave, "Do this", and the slave does it.' [1]When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, 'Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith."*

Imagine having such confidence in Jesus that you know if Jesus just says the word, your servant will be well!

We have trouble understanding that kind of confidence and yet we are drawn to it. How did he have it and how can we acquire it for ourselves? Obviously the Centurion noticed Jesus and paid attention to all that he did. The Centurion noticed his authority and command. The Centurion noticed his power. We too can be aware of Jesus. We too can study all that he said and did. We too can observe his power and authority. We too can gain such confidence.

If you would like to pray with others who are seeking and developing a greater faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we invite you to come forward to the right side of the sanctuary behind the grand piano every Sunday after the postlude and join us in prayer.

Submitted by Arlene Strauch on behalf of the Healing Prayer Ministry

Stewardship

What A Charlie Brown Christmas Says About Stewardship

The beloved Christmas show *A Charlie Brown Christmas* has been on television for over fifty years and is the longest running cartoon special in history. Several weeks ago, I was told something about the show I had not noticed before that is rich in spirituality.

One of the main characters in the show is Linus, who is always seen with his security blanket. The only time he is without this blanket is when it is being washed as he anxiously waits by the dryer to get it back. In the show Linus explains the true meaning of Christmas to Charlie Brown by reciting the nativity narrative word for word found in Luke 2:8-14.

In that scene as Linus shares what Christmas is all about, he drops his security blanket. He drops his blanket at the exact time he utters the words "fear not!" Far from being a coincidence, many believe Charles Schulz, a deeply spiritual man, specifically wrote this into the scene.

When the angel of the Lord proclaims "fear not," we are freed from our fears and the habits we are unable or unwilling to break ourselves. We can get rid of the false security we hold onto as we learn to trust Jesus instead. False security takes many forms. While most of us have progressed past the security blanket and thumb sucking of our youth, some find other types of dependence. For some, and perhaps for many it is the accumulation of wealth. Prudent personal finance suggests we need to have a certain amount of money saved to meet unforeseen financial needs and prepare for times when our income declines. It's the amount of wealth we need that often puzzles us. Some take the stance that more is better and consider their strategy conservative and prudent. I believe the solution is to achieve a level of wealth without compromising or ignoring what God commands we give to our church and to others.

As we reflect on the events of 2017 and our plans for the new year, it seems like a good time to think about our strategy as stewards of God's money entrusted to us. Today's world is filled with uncertainty and many of us grasp for something temporal for security, whether it be wealth or something else. This is a world in which it is very difficult to "fear not." But amid our fears and insecurity, I pray we remember how Linus serves as an inspiration for us to fear not and to seek the true security that comes only from God and obedience to his word.

May God bless you abundantly this wonderful Christmas season and beyond.

Dan Maloney

A Message from The Worship Committee

We have such a wonderful choir, it is not surprising that the congregation wishes to express its appreciation, and applause after an anthem has become traditional. However, when the choir sings in the service, they are not performing; they are leading us in worship. Applause is usually not appropriate. The choir would appreciate much more an awed silence--or perhaps a quiet "amen." On the other hand, when they present one of their more exclamatory anthems, applause may be irresistible. A personal thank you to a choir member is always welcome.

Congregational Care Ministry

"If one member suffers, all suffer together with it, if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."
I Corinthians 12:26

What is the Congregational Care Ministry?

The Congregational Care Ministry was created to assist Pastor Charlie so that all members are remembered and loved not only in moments or seasons of distress, but in ordinary times, and days of celebration. It is our goal to have each member assigned a Congregational Care Friend or as we refer to them as a CCF. A CCF is a friend who has a trusting relationship with its member. Members can call on their CCF in crisis knowing they will be responded to with care and confidentiality. The CCF is equipped to both befriend that person and to connect them with the resources of the church. Through various forms of contact, the CCF regularly offers support and friendship to their people. Our tools are: listening, empathy, encouragement, and prayer. These are powerful tools that are given to us by Jesus to bring his love to each other.

Is this something that you are interested in or moved by? I ask that you pray and reflect upon this request as we are still in need of members who are good listeners, who are compassionate and enjoy visiting people (sickness or just checking in) to become a CCF.

Please consider this ministry as we currently have 17 members who are not assigned to a CCF. If you have any questions please contact Bernadette Barnes at bbarnes03@icloud.com or 440-320-4337.

On behalf of the Deacons, help us “to provide Christly care as we minister to one another”.

Worship Committee

Happy New year to all of you! The coming year will have new things in store to enhance your worship experience and grow spiritually.

There will be a Lighthouse Contemporary Service “What Went Well/Better If” meeting on Wednesday January 10 from 6:30 – 8:00 in order to assess this ministry. The time coincides with the youth group meeting, but is intended to be an all-congregation meeting. Please share your thoughts on this important ministry. Refreshments of pizza and drinks will be served.

Two special events in the life of our faith will be recognized this month. Sunday, January 7, is Epiphany. On this day we celebrate the coming of the wise men to see the baby Jesus. In this event, we see the coming of the non-Jewish world to Jesus. The following Sunday, we will recognize Jesus’s baptism. Inspired by His baptism, we will have a remembrance of our own. Look for plans for these events in upcoming bulletins.

Our committee has been looking for new communion preparers. We would like to thank Joyce Shramo, Deb Reichlin, Sharon and Fred Call, David Brunner, John and Margre Mills and Gary and Marcy Uhl for joining Wayne and Susan Linson to serve on this team. We appreciate your willingness to serve.

And finally, we hope the time of Advent helped you prepare for Christ’s birth. Thanks to all who made the Advent season so meaningful. From the Advent candle lighters, carolers, youth group Sunday morning refreshments, cookie walk participants, sanctuary and foyer decorating, the beautiful and meaningful Sunday worship and music – it was truly an Old Fashioned Christmas season shared with our church family.

As always, we welcome comments and suggestions to make your worship experience more worthwhile.

The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee: Margre Lind-Mills, Dave Brunner, Lynn Campsey Clutter, Chris Chase, Muriel Homer, Barbara Lehmkuhl, Janet Hukill, Beth Shoemaker, Marcy Uhl, Ruth Weeks

Mission Matters

"Oh the weather outside was frightful but the workers were so delightful"...Okay that might be stretching it, but the volunteers that have worked on the Lorain ramp project have put a lot of time and effort into making a safe and convenient ramp for a family in need. We have learned a great deal and have gotten to know each other better. Thank-you to everyone that helped fund and work on the project.

Thanks to everyone that was able to support the Christmas Joy and Christmas Eve offerings. Isn't it comforting to know that your donations will be helping people from all walks of life.

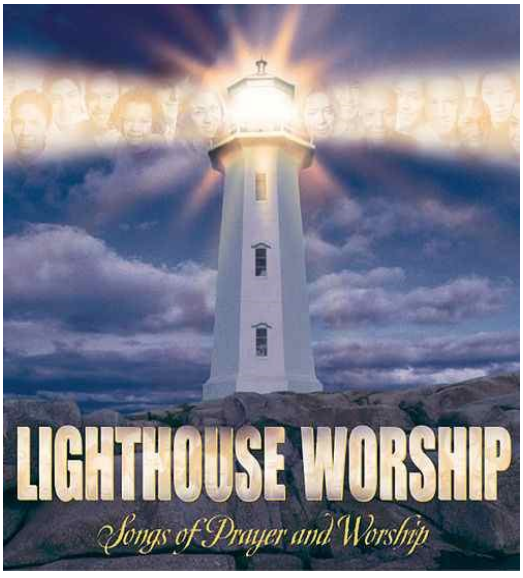
The Mission Committee appreciates everyone's hard work with the November and December Lunch Bunch lunches. We are blessed to be able to share a nice holiday meal with our guests. Please note, should anyone ask, our true mission with this monthly meal is to provide a free, community lunch for anyone that attends. We like to add music, fellowship and faith to the event. The food that is passed on from Second Harvest via LCM (Lorain Cooperative Ministries) is secondary to the lunch. We are happy to be able to pass it on but we see it as a bonus not part of our true plan. Our next meal is January 18, 2018. Set up, clean up and serving help is always needed beginning at about 9:30am. If you would like to help with dessert, please contact Kathy Navarro. 440-233-6214

January 21st we will be collecting 2¢ a meal donations. We collect "spare change" (checks and dollars too) to support the programs to end hunger in our Presbytery. As a family, it is nice to be able to collect coins to show children how when working together, we are able to accomplish more. If you prefer to make a deductible donation, make your check payable to ALPC with a notation to 2¢ a meal. Anyone is welcome to help count the change after church on the 21st.

two cents

Please visit us at one of our monthly meetings the first Monday of the month at 7:00pm at ALPC.
Beth Janis 440-522-1771

Lighthouse Contemporary Worship



Did you attend the Lighthouse Contemporary Worship Service? Do you have ideas for Contemporary Worship at ALPC? Mark your calendars for Wednesday, January 10. We will be meeting from 6:30-7:30 PM to document our thoughts and ideas on contemporary worship at ALPC, answering the questions, “What Went Well” and “Even Better if.”

While we are not ready to relaunch Lighthouse just yet, the Worship & Spiritual Life Committee would like to know what you are thinking! This meeting is scheduled such that you can still attend the regularly scheduled Wednesday night activities, and we can get ideas from as many people as possible. Pizza will be served, so please let Margre Lind Mills know if you will attend. Can’t attend that night? Please forward your thoughts to Margre at Margre.Lind@gmail.com or call her at 440-785-1160.

Deacons

This morning is a good morning....all of my daughters just arrived home from school for Christmas break, and are curled up in their beds, sleeping in. It brings me comfort knowing they are all safe and cozy sleeping under the same roof as I am.

I woke this morning feeling a bit in the holiday spirit, so I treated myself by adding a teaspoon of cinnamon to my regular Maxwell House coffee grounds. I plugged in the lights to our Christmas tree then built a morning fire in our wood burning fireplace. Most of the time we burn fires after dinner in front of the television, each girl taking turns curling up in front of it with Sadie, our "fire dog"...who refuses to leave, regardless of who is sitting there.

This morning is different though...all are still asleep and the television sits silent with a dark screen. The only sound I hear is the sound of the flames of my fire crackling within my fireplace. A rare morning in which my mind is not focused on my next obligation, or proposal that I need to write. I'm not pouring my coffee into my thermos so I can keep refilling my coffee mug in between trips to Lowes or Avon Concrete.

This morning I can just sit alone and take in the specifics of the flame's colors...stare at the contrast of the charred logs against the glow of its burning embers. I can listen to its sounds...like a flag whipping in the wind with the cracks and pops of bacon frying in a hot skillet in the back ground. A rare morning where I have arrived at a stillness of heart.

Oh, the possibilities from this strange place I sit...a clarity when reflecting on my life, and maybe more importantly, a clarity to my own voice when speaking to God.

With intention, I urge you all to find the stillness within your own heart...whether it waits on a path in the woods, or by a fire's side, or in a quiet evening reading a book that sparks inspiration within yourself.

When you get there, take a moment to pray for somebody in your life...or just give thanks...I promise you, your voice to God will be clearer.

The Deacons at Avon Lake Presbyterian Church look forward to a great new year, with hopes of serving our congregation with open hearts.... we promise to keep listening for God's word, within our serving.

We look forward to hosting our annual Chili Cook-off towards the end of January as well as hosting Dr. Issam Nemeh for his healing service at our church on February 10th from 10:00-3:00 (tickets for the healing service can be purchased online at pathtofaith.com).

Sincerely,

John Weeden, Moderator of The Deacons

Avon Lake Presbyterian Church
32340 Electric Blvd.
Avon Lake, OH 44012
Return Service Requested

Sunday Worship

Worship at 10:00 am
Youth & Children's Sunday School at 10:15 am
(440) 933-6240
www.avonlakechurch.com
www.facebook.com/avonlakepc
alpresby@avonlakepc.org

Pastor	Charles E. Swartz
Pastor Emeritus	Alfred A. Hart
Custodian	Jessica Hughett
Director of Christian Education	Lee Lohr
Director of Music	Muriel Homer
Director of Youth Ministries	Lauren Vann
Financial Secretary	Lynn Morway
Lock-up Custodian	Ed Homer
Office Administrator	Cindi Dansizen
Social Media Director	Julie Burr
Treasurer	Marcy Uhl
Director of Preschool	Julie Erker