

Saints Alive!

Volume 17, Issue 1
January 2019
"Friends in Christ, Serving
Together with Love"



AVON LAKE BICENTENIAL CHURCH CHOIR CONCERT

When the committee in charge of the year-long celebration of *Avon Lake's 200 years* met to plan events, they thought about the significance of the churches. That led them to the church choirs, so they got the directors together and planned a very special concert. Five churches, including ours, are participating. There will be music from the approximate era in which Avon Lake was founded up through more modern music. There will be mass choir singing, hand bell playing, the praise band from one of the churches, and at one point, all of those together. There will even be a harp solo.

We urge you to make time in your schedule to attend this event. Here are the details:

Sunday January 20th at 3:00 p.m.
Avon Lake Performing Arts Center



Annual Meeting of the Congregation Sunday, January 27, 2019, 5:00 pm 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 2019/2020 Nominating Committee.
- to review the reports of all the committees
- To review the 2018 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. After the meeting, join the Deacons in Hart Hall for our annual Chili/Soup Cook-off!

Chili & Soup Cook Off!



We know that even though it's cold in January you look forward to this time of the year because of the Chili and Soup Cook-Off! We will be having this crowd pleasing event on Sunday, January 27th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. In Hart Hall. There will be a sign-up sheet in the foyer of the church to estimate attendance and find out who will be entering their favorite recipe.



FROM THE PASTOR/ Charlie Swartz

Dear Friends,

Christmas is just a few days away. While that greatly excites the children to a near crescendo of excitement, to us adults the oncoming event means we have much to do in too little time! Yikes, how can we be sure to finish up the gift buying, making, wrapping, and sending so that our presents will delight our people? And what about the final cookie baking, and Christmas meal preparations to complete, and, oh my gosh, I forgot to buy stocking stuffers! Yikes!

So, take a deep breath. What if I told you that this Sunday you could come to a beautiful room decorated with red poinsettias, white cyclamens, miniature pines, nativity banners and sit down amidst friends? To your listening ears would descend melodies of Christmas peace and joy sung from the lips of our angelic choir members. You will be nestled in spiritual comfort by the carols, anthems, and Christmas scriptures which comprise our soul filling "Lessons and Carols" worship. The Spirit you want to experience this Christmas season will surround and fill you.

If you read this and have a babe in arms or a toddler on the carpet or a child in elementary school, I encourage you to bring them to the 5:30 pm Christmas Eve family service. A fast-paced multi-media experience will both hold your child's short attention and provide them an opportunity to BE IN THE STORY.

Mystery and Holy Presence are the Holy Spirit's gift to all who enter that same sanctuary later that night (8:00 or 11:00) in the dark of Christmas Eve. All who breathe in the sanctified air of candles and hope will have their hearts warmed so that fears and anxieties will vanish under the blanket of comfort and joy.

After Christmas, we may experience a bit of a let down. I know that I often do. As a child, I was so excited about what I would get, that after the presents were ripped into I felt a dullness inside.

That dullness came from the end of anticipation. All those hours wondering what the new toy would be like were much more intriguing than playing with the actual toy. On television the little boys playing with that train were overcome with happiness! They had smiles from ear to ear, they were simply jubilant with that amazing toy, but the train I got did not seem so great as it went around and around the track in my house. It was, dare I say it, disappointing.

Do you occasionally become disappointed when the celebration is over? Do not be surprised if you do. Many of us feel a little bit of that. Perhaps the family did not get together as expected, or maybe you had the flu and could not eat Christmas dinner. Or maybe you put a lot of time and expense into getting wonderful gifts for others, but the ones you received did not match your expectations, and you feel a little unloved. The great hopes we place on Christmas to bring total happiness into our lives can cause us problems.

Do not be hard on yourself, or on others if you are feeling less than cheery when you are cleaning up and putting away ornaments. It is normal, especially in a grey northern climate lacking bright winter sunlight, to feel down or depressed around the holidays. If you are, try to remember that Jesus loves you on your low days just as well as on your holiday planning ones. Try to remember that it is ok to feel down, and remember that if it passed in previous years, it will again. Take it easy on yourself. Read that new book you got. Give yourself permission to care for yourself, as you probably have been caring so hard for so many people getting ready for Christmas. God loves you.

The Christ we adore on Christmas Eve is born to be with us in all of our days, good and bad, boring and exciting. Jesus is not just born in a stable, but He is born anew in our hearts when we believe in Him. He is wanting to provide us with steady joy and spiritual strength every moment. If blue days come after the celebrating, take the time to pray deeply to feel His love. When we take the time to invite His love in the dull days, He transforms them into delightful days.



Pastor Charlie continued

If you enter a period of darkness that does not improve, be wise to seek help. Our primary care physicians are a wise first choice if we do not know where to go. A therapist can lead us to discover new insights that can help us through old problems. I have helped many people through some difficult times and am always available to you for counsel.

Jesus loves us. Please do not forget that in the busyness or the “blahs.” Each Sunday we learn that again and again. Each Sunday we experience that love again and again. We gather as friends to love each other and soak up God’s love. We may enter happy or blue. It is okay. Jesus will give us what we need. That is why he was born on Christmas Day.

Seeking that peace with you, Pastor Charlie

Stewardship



As December is coming to a close, we know everyone is busy and looking forward to the holidays and spending time with our loved ones. The Session also has the task of preparing the church budget for the coming year. If you haven't done so yet, please take time to send in your pledge card for 2019. We are falling behind our total pledge amount from last year. We know that ALPC is important to all our members, and we need your financial contribution to continue our programs of worship, mission, Christian education and fellowship. Thank you, and Happy Holidays.

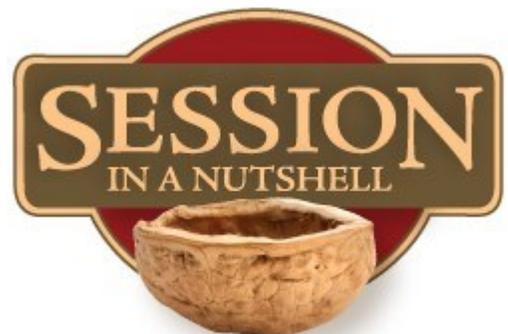
The Stewardship Committee

Session Highlights

The Session met on Dec. 17. Highlights of their meeting are:

- Heard what Pastor Charlie learned in 7 sessions of leadership coaching. These lessons are helping him better lead and support staff and officers. Session leaders could also benefit from them.
- The budget is still in formation, with budget planning meetings scheduled.
- So far, 70 pledges totaling \$240,440 have been turned in. Last year at this time we had received 83 pledges for \$263,000 and the final result was \$285,653 with 97 pledges.
- Human Resources is writing job descriptions for the new social media and maintenance positions in conjunction with the Evangelism and Property committees.
- A video of Santa explaining the true meaning of Christmas will be shown at the children's Christmas Eve service followed by a live pageant.
- The 2019 summer youth mission trip will be to New Mexico.
- Cornerstone Preschool now has a Five Star rating!
- The youth filled 12 shoeboxes to be given to needy seniors.
- A notebook containing all procedures for volunteers and others will be assembled and put in the church office.
- Content used in the new sign has been adjusted to flash less white on neighboring houses, and it automatically shuts off at 11pm.

Elizabeth Shoemaker, Clerk of Session



Congratulations Cornerstone Preschool!



Cornerstone Preschool has earned the five star status in the State of Ohio's "Step Up To Quality" program. "Step Up To Quality" is a tiered quality rating and improvement system created to recognize and promote early learning and development programs that meet and exceed quality standards for health and safety licensing requirements. Through an extensive application and review, Cornerstone Preschool earned the highest rating possible. This five star status recognizes learning and development programs that exceed licensing standards. Recognized programs must also show evidence of a commitment to continuous improvement, the continuing education of teachers, the use

of learning and development standards to support children's learning, as well as relationship-building with families and communities. Programs earning five star ratings:

- o Exceed learning standards
- o Have low staff/child ratios
- o Use child assessment results to plan activities that best support learning and development goals for each child
- o Share assessment results and create goals for children
- o Develop plans to support children as they transition to a new classroom or educational setting
- o Partner with other organizations or businesses within the community to support children and their families
- o Have an active and organized parent volunteer group
- o Use input from families and community partners to assist in the program's continuous improvement process
- o Have accreditation by an approved organization

I am extremely proud of Cornerstone Preschool. To be recognized with the State's highest five star rating is a testament to the care and dedication the entire staff provides to our youngest students on a daily basis. I truly appreciate their hard work and commitment to building a strong foundation and a love for learning in our students.

Julie Erker, Director

Video Ministry

Have you noticed that a group of dedicated volunteers have been videoing our worship service each Sunday since early in 2018? This is broadcast via Facebook Live and allows members and friends unable to worship with us in person, to worship with us virtually. This can be viewed "live" during the service, as well as afterwards via the Church's Facebook page. Every time these videos are viewed or shared, they become a great way for our church to witness our love for Christ and demonstrate the Holy Spirit at work in our church community. Would you like to be a part of this video ministry? We are always looking for volunteers that would like to participate in this ministry and are happy to provide training, as well as written instructions. The schedule is wide open for 2019. In addition, we would like to video all 3 of our Christmas Eve services and are especially in need of volunteers for the 5:30 pm and 8:00 pm services. Interested or have any questions? Please contact Margre Lind Mills at 440-785-1160 or Margre.Lind@gmail.com.

[A few hints for viewing: 1. Go to the church's Facebook page listed as 'Avon Lake Presbyterian Church'. 2. Press 'Videos' near the top of the page. 3. You may have to search by scrolling down a bit as they are not exclusively listed by date, though most recent are usually at the top. 4. You may also have to adjust your screen auto-rotate feature (on or off) to view it in the correct orientation, though it is usually set for horizontal.]



Worship and Spiritual Life Committee



The Christmas Spirit is alive and well at ALPC as we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

During worship on Sunday, Dec. 23, we will be celebrating the Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols. This is a traditional Christmas worship service where the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus is told in nine short Bible readings from Genesis, the prophetic books and the Gospels,

interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns, choir and instrumental music. We are blessed to have talented musicians, as well as Muriel Homer, our very dedicated music director, at ALPC that will lead us in this inspiring, not-to-be-missed service.

Three services are planned for Christmas Eve – 5:30 pm, 8:00 pm, and 11:00 pm. Our 5:30 pm worship will be led by Pastor Charlie and our CE Director, Lee Lohr, and will include a child-friendly (battery-operated) candlelight service. Services at 8:00 pm and 11:00 pm will be traditional candlelight services led by Pastor Charlie, with the addition of Communion by Intinction at the 11:00 pm service. Please join us for any or all services on Christmas Eve. Each will be beautiful, yet unique, and sure to draw us closer to Jesus and fill us with his Holy Spirit.

Our last Sunday worship in 2018, on December 30, will be an interesting twist on Gifts of the Spirit. Hope to see you there!

We will welcome 2019 by celebrating Epiphany on January 6, which according to Matthew, is when the Magi came to Bethlehem to worship Jesus. On January 13, we will again remember and celebrate our Baptism. And believe it or not, your Worship & Spiritual Life Committee is already looking toward plans for Ash Wednesday on March 6, and Lent, which begins on March 10.

The Sunday volunteer schedule for January-June 2019 has been mailed. If you have any questions or concerns, please see JoAnn Wainscott. Our video ministry team is currently recording each Sunday worship service on Facebook Live. A library of worship videos can be found on the church's Facebook page...just search for Avon Lake Presbyterian Church. Our schedule is open for 2019. Please see Margre Lind Mills if you are interested or have questions.

Have you noticed and admired our beautiful Sanctuary decorations this past year? The flowers, trees, fabric, arrangements and candles that have graced our sanctuary in 2018 have been lovingly coordinated by Lynn Campsey-Clutter and Barb Lehmkuhl. These two ladies have decided to serve God at ALPC in other ways, and are stepping down as coordinators of the sanctuary flowers and decorations. Thank you Lynn and Barb! If you have a flair for decorating and a passion for service, please contact Margre Lind Mills for more information.

As always, we are open to feedback and suggestions for how we can help each other experience God during worship.

Written by JoAnn Wainscott, on behalf of the Worship and Spiritual Life Committee.
(Dave Brunner, Chris Chase, Muriel Homer, Janet Hukill, Margre Lind Mills, Beth Shoemaker, Pastor Charlie, Marcy Uhl and JoAnn Wainscott)

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.

Mission Matters

Happy New Year and thank-you!

Once again ALPC has shared our blessings through the support of the Youth cookie sale, Christmas Joy, and Christmas Eve Offerings. Thank you for your donations and prayers for the groups that benefit from these special giving opportunities.

YOU are INVITED

Free Community Lunch Bunch

The January Lunch Bunch lunch is Thursday, January 17th. Help is always needed Wednesday for food prepping and Thursday for set up and serving beginning at about 9:30 am. Also clean up help is in high demand at 12:30. Please contact Carol Madson at 934-2643 if you would like to be a part of this great mission. If baking dessert is more your style, please contact Kathy Navarro for details. kn Navarro5@hotmail.com. Thank-you to our "snowbird volunteers". See you in the spring.

Note: due to changes in commercial trash handling, we no longer have a recycling dumpster. Lunch bunch always has plenty of recyclable items. If you are able to take some boxes or cans to add to your personal recycling bin, please speak with Marian Conn, Sue Mabe, Mandy Robison, Kathy Leopold or Carol Madson.

***Watch for details regarding a "Rise Against Hunger" event.

The mission group meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00pm at church. Please join us. Beth Janis, Mission Matters, 440-522-1771



Youth Group



The youth group Christmas cookie sales totaled \$847.00.
That is absolutely amazing!
The generosity of our church family is a blessing straight from heaven!
Thank you to everyone that participated.
We can't wait to see how the February 24th soup sale turns out...



The Youth Group had a very busy and fun December! We would like to take a moment to extend a huge THANK YOU to all our church family who baked and shopped for cookies during the Cookie Sale.

Looking ahead to January, we will be taking a short break over the holidays. Sunday School and Youth Group will resume on January 13. We will have our regular meeting from 6-7:30.

There will be no Youth Group meeting January 27th. We encourage the youth to attend the Congregational meeting that evening. As a reminder, if your youth has been confirmed, they are a voting member. Following the meeting is the Chili and Soup Cook off and we look forward to seeing everyone!

We are always looking for ideas and activities to enjoy. Do you have a special skill or interest that can be shared? We'd love to blend your passion for a topic with the youth. Please feel free to contact either Jay or Leslie Knox.

Parents of youth in grades 6-12, don't forget we'll be starting our own monthly meetings on January 13th. We'll eat dinner as a large group and then branch off to have time together. Feel free to stay, chat and hang out while your youth enjoy their own meeting.

Financial Report

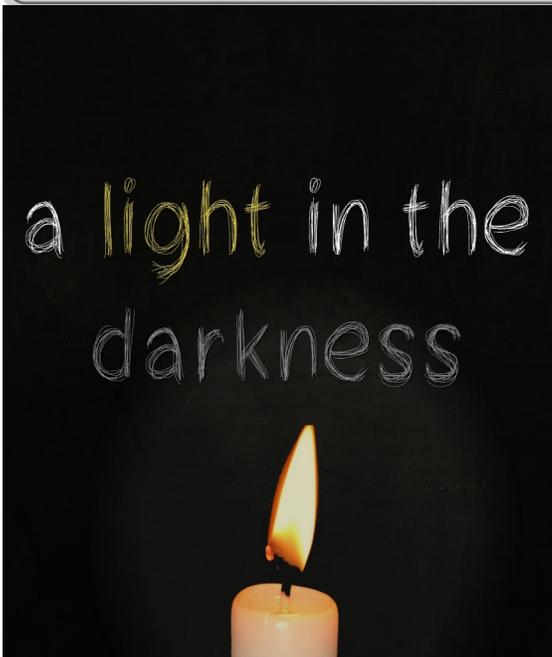
Here is a summary of our year-to-date income and expenses compared to budget through November 2018:

	Nov YTD Actual	Nov YTD Budget
Income:		
Congregational Giving	\$297,430	\$313,041
Other Income	<u>12,056</u>	<u>12,059</u>
Total Income	\$309,486	\$325,100
Expense:		
Worship & Spiritual Life	\$115,248	\$113,403
Christian Education	3,819	5,202
Stewardship & Mission	5,349	5,317
Property (new sign)	52,874	40,792
Support Staff & General Expenses	117,282	139,459
Youth Mission Trip	2,315	8,000
Other Expenses	<u>12,585</u>	<u>14,353</u>
Total Expense	\$309,472	\$326,526

While year-to-date giving is significantly under budget, there have been offsetting savings on the Youth Director salary and Mission Trip expenses. Please be sure to bring your 2018 pledge current by the end of December and give generously to the 2019 Stewardship Campaign.

Susan Reighard, Finance Committee

Healing Prayer Ministry



John 1:1-5 *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life,* and the life was the **light** of all people. ⁵The **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."*

Making a difference – being a light in the darkness can be as simple as smiling at the cashier who is having a tough time; opening a door for the person behind you to go first; letting someone else take the parking spot, or forgiving someone for disappointing us. It's often the little things that lift us up or bring us down and it's always our choice to be a blessing. However, sometimes our hearts are so heavy with worry and sadness and our bodies are so full of pain that we just can't muster up the kindness. That's when we want to remember to ask for the help of the Holy Spirit.

Every Sunday morning after worship there are pray-ers in the front of the sanctuary on the left side by the wheel chair ramp who love

to invite the Holy Spirit to empower us as He helps us focus on the power, the glory, and the unconditional love of God. We invite you to join us!

Submitted by Arlene Strauch on behalf of the Healing Prayer Ministry

Our Renewal Journey

GOD'S JOURNEY FOR US

RENEWALPC

LEARN DISCOVER BECOME

Many thanks to all of you that have shared your time, talents, ideas and energies as we have moved along this Renewal Journey at ALPC. Your servant coordinating team (Margre Lind Mills, Carol Nussle, Pastor Charlie, Jo Ann Wainscott and Sybil Wendling) has taken a short hiatus during the month of December to allow all of us to focus on our own personal renewal journey as we prepare for and celebrate the birth of our Lord. In January, we will focus on finalizing our 5-year milestone and work with committees, ministries, staff, Session and Deacons as they develop their 2019 plans using the Key Results and Milestones as Guideposts.

Recall that in November, your church officers, committee chairs, our clerk, program staff and coordinating team members met to identify Key Result Areas from our Guiding Vision. For ALPC to continue to grow in our faith, act out our love for others, and fulfill God's Vision for us, we want to be a church community that is:

Inclusive
Forgiving
Welcoming
Serving
Compassionate
Obedient
Faith-full
Life Long Learners

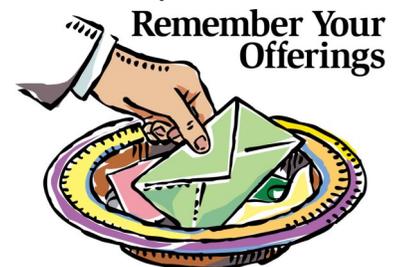
Do you have ideas on how we can do this? Please think and pray and share your ideas! We want to hear you!

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

Per Capita

Per Capita 2019

All Presbyterians are called to take part in the ecclesiastical and administrative work shared by the whole church through per capita giving. The annual rate is a per-member apportionment that is assessed biennially by the General Assembly. (Book of Order, G-3.0106) All congregations — large and small — are encouraged to participate, either through an annual budget item or through a special direct appeal to their congregations. In your monthly offering envelope packet there is a special offering envelope specifically for your contribution to the Per Capita. Per Capita is a "head tax" assessed by the denomination to help with the cost of the work in the local Presbytery, the Synod and the work of the General Assembly.



The amount you need to pay per member is \$32.41.

Christian Education

Congratulations to our Cornerstone Preschool for achieving 5-star status (the highest) from the state of Ohio! Julie Erker, Director, and the teachers, worked hard to achieve this milestone.

Thank you to everyone who participated in and are helping with the Christmas pageant at the Christmas Eve Family service. As of this writing, the service has not yet happened. Hopefully, everyone will enjoy it and find it meaningful, especially the children. A special thank you to Jay Knox for his assistance and to Barb and Cathy Graves for providing music.

You may have noticed that a few months ago, we tried having the children's message earlier in the worship service and then changed it back to after the choir anthem. Having the children's message earlier enabled getting the children to Sunday school earlier. However, they barely got a flavor of being in worship. After moving the message back to a bit later in the service, I noticed that many of the children seem to enjoy passing the peace. If there aren't any children sitting near you and you are able to move around, take time to greet some children. It's important for them to get familiar with adult members and for the adults to get familiar with the children.



The "Advent in Narnia" study had some good reflections on the season of Advent. We considered the Christian symbolism that C. S. Lewis included in his fantasy tale and how that brings meaning to us today. The hour of time each week went quickly. I appreciated the number of people who took time during this busy time of year to participate.

We will continue to offer short-term studies for adult Sunday school from time to time. Starting on January 27 following the worship service, we will have a 4-week study on, "The Gospel According to Dr. Seuss." In between short-term studies, discussions on current event topics offered by The Wired Word will continue. If you haven't heard about the Wired Word, it's a study developed by a team that looks at current events, finds appropriate Bible passages, and offers questions about lessons that can be learned and applied to our faith life.

Christian Education is an important part of faith development. Thank you for supporting this mission of Avon Lake Presbyterian Church.

Lee Lohr, Director of Christian Education

Reminder



**The church office will be closed on
Tuesday, December 25,
Wednesday, December 26
Tuesday, January 1
and Monday, January 21.**

Healing Service at our Church

Inspirational Talk
And Healing Service
Avon Lake, Presbyterian Church

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24
1:00 PM—5:00 PM

Issam Nemeah, M.D., will be giving an Inspirational Talk followed by a Healing Service. Everyone will receive an individual prayer with Dr. Nemeah. The service will be approximately 4 hours. Children under the age of 12 will be the guests of [Path to Faith](#) when accompanied by an adult, and do not require a ticket. Ticket Price is \$75. **If you are a member of ALPC,** contact the church office for a FREE ticket.



Groups in our church

Men's Lunch Group

The Men's Lunch Group meets for lunch the 4th Wednesday of every month. (This is a new day of the month as of December.) They meet in the church office at noon to decide where they will be having lunch that day. **Contact: Tim Kurak 933-2615**

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee has the responsibility of recommending members to the congregation for election to the Session and Board of Deacons. We are looking for new members. **Contact: Kathy Leopold 242-5086**

Walking Group

This group gathers at the church Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9:00 am, during the program year to go for an hour walk ending with coffee and fellowship in the church office. **Contact: Gary Uhl 933-3884**

Prayer Concerns

God's Blessings, love and comfort For:

Thomas Austin (Artie's brother), Bill (Joe LaGrassa's friend), Carol (Amea Dunfee's Aunt) Rose Conti (Mike Dean's mother), Ethel (Penny Helbig's friend), Dave Brunner's father, Chris (Darlena Gallant's sister), Debbie (Penny Helbig's friend), Clay Dusek's sister, Michelle Gilliam, Susan Howland (Bill Till's sister), Dave Joyce's dad, Vickie Joyce's mom, Janice (Margre Lind Mills' friend) Leslie Knox's dad, Terry Kaufman (The Uhl's brother-in-law), Jim (Linda Kotowski's brother's nephew), Mary Lou LaGrassa, Erleen Lind, Ann Lee Loescher, Sue Miller (Kathy Navarro's mom), Molly (Cris Till's niece), Theda McGrew, Tom Metzger, Bob and Polly Morris (Mandy Robison's parents), Ruth Meyer, Ardelle Mills (John Mills' mom), Noel Peel, Carolyn Rose's mom, Susan Storms' brother Ron and his stepson Lloyd, Jim Shane, Sharon Smucker, Jim Sweet (Cindi Dansizen's brother) and Kay Usher.

Current Concerns:

Don Hall needs our prayers.

Noel Peel needs our prayers.

Al Hart is in O'Neill Healthcare Nursing Home recovering.

Ann Austin is receiving chemotherapy.

Sharon Smucker is recovering from hip surgery and pneumonia.

Serving in Our Armed Forces

Bradley Biddle (Ruth Murphy's grandson), Patrick Compton (Carol and Larry Madson's grandson), Evan & Ryan Johnson, Anastasia and Alex Lescarbeau (Amy Dansizen's nephew and wife), Kevin Poyer (friend of Sue Scott and George Lawson), Jamie Waddell (Kay Usher's grandson) and Derek Weeden (John and Kris Weeden's nephew).



Newsletter deadline

The deadline to submit articles to Cindi via email: alpresby@avonlakepc.org for the February 2019 newsletter is **January 15**.

Attention Committee Heads: Annual Report

The deadline to submit articles to Cindi via email: alpresby@avonlakepc.org for the 2018 Annual Report is **January 13**.

Sunday Worship

Worship at 10:00 am

Youth & Children's Sunday School at 10:00 am

(440) 933-6240

www.avonlakechurch.com

www.facebook.com/avonlakepc

alpresby@avonlakepc.org

Pastor
Pastor Emeritus
Custodian
Director of Christian Education
Director of Music
Financial Secretary
Lock-up Custodian
Office Administrator
Treasurer
Director of Preschool

Charles E. Swartz
Alfred A. Hart
Jessica Hughett
Lee Lohr
Muriel Homer
Lynn Morway
Ed Homer
Cindi Dansizen
Marcy Uhl
Julie Erker