



Dear Friends,

Although this is my final newsletter article, it is not a “Good bye!” As Leslie Knox said to Debbie and me after the congregational meeting to end my pastorate, this is a new beginning. She is right, you know. It is a new beginning. We do not exactly know what this new chapter in our life will feel like, but we know that you will be part of it.

Of all the churches I served, you are the one that I would choose to have around me in disability. I know we are going to need love and support—Debbie, Henry and me— and you all share both of those so generously. Generally it is not a good idea to compare congregations, but I am going to. You are the people I want to grow old with, you are the people that I want to finish my career with, you are the people I want to begin my next stage of life with.

In previous congregations, there was always an invisible barrier between the congregations and me. It was clear that for them serving as pastor put me in a separate category. There were wonderful exceptions, of course, but in spite of what I wanted, I was put on a pedestal. That was painful and lonely because when you are on a pedestal you cannot be human, you cannot have weaknesses or make mistakes, but are only appreciated when you do things well. But that never happened with you. From day one, I and my family were welcomed as fellow Christians with a need for human love.

Yes, you have loved and accepted us just as we have loved you. You have always had reasonable expectations of me that were joyful to endeavor to fulfill. And when things did not turn out as we expected, you considered with me what could be learned, and I was never judged. You always assumed that what work I did out of sight was faithful and true. You believed in me and trusted me. What more could a person want!

We worked well together. In the last years, significant events outside of our control affected us. The most obvious one was the COVID pandemic. I applied all my gifts to whatever the challenge, as did you all. We experienced such meaning and Spirit as we overcame challenges. God has surely been glorified in our service, His love freely known.

Now we are beginning a new chapter. As I said, I am no longer your pastor, yet we are your friends. Henry will be still in the youth group continuing with whatever ministries they do. Debbie is still a member and my Mother will be continuing on with her many groups in the church. As expected, at first I will need to worship elsewhere to give new pastoral leadership the opportunity to gel. As it is not appropriate for former pastors to be involved with ministries in their former congregation, I will not be doing funerals or attending the prayer group. I will be able to attend funerals as a worshipper. When the Committee on Ministry decides it is the right time, then I will start worshipping again on Sunday. Of course, the Presbytery fosters friendships and I am encouraged to maintain those in ways that are appropriate.

So, thanks for welcoming me as your pastor, and me and my family as your friends. While the pastorate ends, friends in Christ remain friends forever!

In Christ's love,  
Charlie

F•R•I•E•N•D•S

## *From Human Resources*

Last Sunday, December 12, was very significant in the life of Avon Lake Presbyterian Church and was even more significant in the life of our Pastor, Charlie Swartz. After worship on December 12, the congregation of ALPC met to formalize a decision, requested by Pastor Charlie, about his future and his career. This meeting was moderated by the Reverend Sharon Core, General Presbyterian of the Western Reserve and friend to Charlie. Also, this meeting was well-attended by the congregation of ALPC, as witnessed by a relatively full parking lot that morning. This good attendance is testimony of the church's care, love, and support of Charlie.

During this meeting, Rev. Core shared the story of when she first met Charlie, who served on the search committee when she was called to the Presbytery of the Western Reserve. She reminded us all of Charlie's multi-lingual gifts that he uses to uncover and share the meaning and wisdom within Holy Scripture. She shared how Charlie led our Presbytery to seek ways to bring social justice to life in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. Intelligence and wise, from-the-heart, leadership are hallmarks of Charlie's career, and will remain key parts of his personality.

This meeting was significant because we were gathered to formalize the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between our church and Pastor Charlie, which will be effective on January 2, so Charlie can begin disability on January 3. This step was not one that the congregation wanted to take, it was not a step that Charlie wanted to request, and it was not a step that our Presbytery wanted to supervise... However, it is a necessary step. The terms of disability specify that this is necessary. We were all called to do the hard, necessary thing by taking this step, but we take this step with love and compassion. Although it saddens us, we look forward with optimism.

Optimism is in Charlie's core and is also part of who ALPC is as Christians. We trust God. This trust gives us optimism. December 12 may signal the end of one chapter of Charlie's story and the end of a chapter for ALPC as well... But it also marks the beginning of a new chapter for Charlie. A chapter in which he can focus more on his family and on his health. This new chapter for ALPC will emphasize that all of us are leaders – whether elders on session, professional staff of the church, or members of the congregation at large. We must all step forward to lead each other and ourselves as we write this next chapter of the story of ALPC.

If you were present during this meeting, thank you. If you were unable to join us, please find time to wish Charlie well and offer him any support that you are able. Charlie's last Sunday in the pulpit will be January 2, which will be followed by a celebration after worship. Please plan to join us then.

Your brother in Christ,  
Matt Wendling, Elder, member of Session, chair of HR

*Time to Celebrate!*

Please join us for worship on January 2nd. And afterward, we will have a celebration of Pastor Charlie. The celebration on January 2 will include an opportunity for everyone to share a favorite memory of Charlie. So, please begin thinking of thoughts and memories to share.

# Deacon News

Our ALPC Deacons have been working hard to support our congregation this month. We've continued to offer the Deacon Ride Service. A few members have taken us up on getting a ride to church. If you need transportation (weekly or just occasionally), please call the church office or Sybil Wendling (440-453-1265, [sybilwendling@gmail.com](mailto:sybilwendling@gmail.com)).

Looking forward to the new year, our Deacons are working on a few fellowship events, all subject to change with the changing pandemic situation.

Save January 30 for a combined Youth Group/Deacons bowling event and be on the lookout for a couple Second Harvest Food Bank volunteer opportunities in January and February. Second Harvest is a great chance to do some good in our community and have some great fellowship.



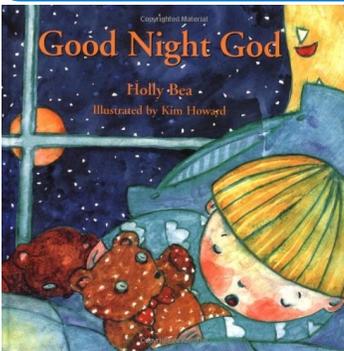
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If anyone has suggestions for activities or events, let one of us know!

**Bathroom Renovations are still going on. Please remember to come to the church office and check in with Cindi before going down the hall to other rooms—for safety's sake.**

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## Christian Education



*New! Good Night, God*

Go to the ALPC Facebook home page to check out this new feature –

**Kids' Bedtime Stories**

- Go to ALPC Facebook Home Page;
- Click on Good Night God;
- Choose a story to share with your little people at bedtime.

Stories have been recorded by ALPC members.

# *Thank You from Mike & Susan Reighard*

A Thank You For Our Church Staff And Worship Committee  
(sung to the tune of "I'll be Home for Christmas")

I'll be home for Christmas  
Back at ALPC  
With glowing lights and Silent Night  
And Chrismons on the tree  
Christmas Eve was all planned,  
By our Worship Team  
Lessons, carols and sermon series  
With angels as our theme  
We'll all be home for Christmas  
Spaced safely in our pew  
Each girl and boy are full of joy  
Thanks to ALL OF YOU!

## *Important Information in the Life of the Church*

### **Annual Meeting of the Congregation Sunday, January 30, after worship in the Sanctuary**

The purpose of the meeting is

- to elect Elders, Deacons and a Trustee
- to elect the 2021-2022 Nominating Committee.
- to review the reports of all the committees
- To review the 2021 Annual Report

### *Attention Committee Heads: Annual Report*

The deadline to submit articles to Cindi via email: [alpresby@avonlakepc.org](mailto:alpresby@avonlakepc.org) for the 2021 Annual Report is **Sunday, January 16.**

# Session Report

The Session met on December 20 – Highlights of their meeting were:

- ◆ This was Pastor Charlie's last meeting with the Session, and love and thanks were expressed.
- ◆ The Session agreed that unless there is discomfort on the part of a future pastor, or other reason Charlie identifies, Charlie may continue to meet with the retired men's lunch group.
- ◆ Learned that November's operating income broke even, but in December, giving has fallen off.
- ◆ An alternative to Simple Give is being researched for online giving in order to save on fees.
- ◆ 109 names of inactive members will be removed from the church roll.
- ◆ For continued pandemic safety, it was decided to continue current policies regarding congregational singing in masks, soloists singing in masks, and no playing of instruments that emit high levels of aerosols, as recent adherence has been spotty.
- ◆ Protocols for handling COVID outbreaks in the congregation will be written, especially regarding notification of those exposed.
- ◆ Christmas Eve candles will be electrical to prevent the need to blow out the candles.
- ◆ Our gap pastor will be Rick Stein, and Presbytery's Committee on Ministry will be providing a list of names to consider for our interim pastor.
- ◆ Cornerstone preregistrations for next year are in process.
- ◆ Good Night, God bedtime stories are being recorded by church members for our youngest members to listen to online.
- ◆ The youth mission trip is being planned for the second week in July.
- ◆ The wall tile in the restrooms is being installed.
- ◆ A final location to store recordings of Pastor Charlie's sermons will be determined.
- ◆ Sharon Core will be preaching on January 9.
- ◆ The Nominating Committee still seeks three new elders to serve on Session.
- ◆ The Session will meet to plan the budget on January 16.

Elizabeth Shoemaker, Clerk of Session

*Winter Greetings  
From our  
Weekly  
Walking  
Group*



## Worship Committee

### Traditional Worship

A few months ago, when I agreed to write this column for the January newsletter, little did I know what changes we would be experiencing. I expected to recap Advent, and at the time of this writing, it is indeed lovely with its emphasis on angels as God's messengers. Pastor Charlie's sermons so far have been excellent and have reminded us that we also are messengers from

God and can serve as angels to one another. We have noticed quite a number of people taking their pictures by the angel wings on the bulletin board in the foyer. I hope all of them continue to sense invisible angel wings carrying them forth in the power of the Holy Spirit to be angels to those around them. God can work in such mysterious ways!

Our committee's December meeting was our last with Pastor Charlie, and it was bittersweet, with a few tears visible even over Zoom. Worship & Spiritual Life works so closely with our pastor, as we support him and share ideas for making our worship services more meaningful. Thank you, Pastor Charlie, for being so great to work with and so supportive of our members' gifts and creativity!

Going forward, we will continue to work with whoever is pastoring us at the time. We want to introduce the methodology of Worship Design Studio to the new pastors. We'll see if they're interested in continuing this way of engaging members in worship using all the senses and worship series. Lest anyone misunderstand, in Worship Design Studio, decorating the sanctuary as we have been doing is part of the message, not just making things pretty. People have different ways of taking in information and learning. While many do absorb the spoken and written word very well, there are those who are tactile learners (needing something to touch), kinetic learners (needing activity to stay engaged), as well as those who receive the message through music, scent, sight, and silence. We want everybody to "hear" the Word!  
"Romans 10:14-17"

If you have any input to give on worship series, decorations, the music ministry, arranging the chancel to fit all the activity that happens there, the sound and projection systems, and anything else worship related, please feel free to share with any member of our committee. We meet on the first Monday of the month via Zoom. You are welcome to join us!

By Beth Shoemaker on behalf of the Worship & Spiritual Life Committee

## Evangelism

It's so nice to see our in-person worship attendance swelling this month with both old, familiar faces and new. As we welcome visitors and extended family members from out of town, please introduce yourself and make them feel welcome. Remember to wear your name badges!

Have you seen ALPC's ad for Christmas Eve services in *Westlife*? We are indebted to Beth Shoemaker for her creative graphic design.

If you're looking for ways to serve our community or your family is in need of support, please check out the "Community Information" tab on our website. Our Mission Committee has provided helpful links for our local mission partners where people can get assistance or for organizations that are needing volunteers.

The latest copy of *Saints Alive*, worship bulletins, and video archives of past services can all be found on our website ([www.avonlakechurch.com](http://www.avonlakechurch.com)). The Photo Galleries are now easier to access and we'd love to add photos of your events or small groups. Feel free to send articles or photos to Cindi Dansizen ([alpresby@avonlakepc.org](mailto:alpresby@avonlakepc.org)) or Susan Reighard ([reighard4@gmail.com](mailto:reighard4@gmail.com))

Respectfully submitted, Susan Reighard

# Financial Report

November was a break-even month financially! Our income is slightly under budget and our expenses continue to be below budget. Our expenses are still about \$3,400 more than our income for the year. Here is the link for online giving: [Give \(simplegive.com\)](http://simplegive.com)

	Nov YTD Actual	YTD Budget
<b>Income:</b>		
Congregational Giving	\$261,300.00	\$261,970.50
Other Income	10,932.54	11,358.34
Total Income	\$272,232.54	\$273,328.84
<b>Expense:</b>		
Staff Expense	\$187,750.29	\$200,470.17
Worship & Spiritual Life	5,995.22	7,333.34
Christian Education	898.97	5,935.42
Stewardship & Mission	4,375.18	4,583.33
Property	41,727.91	43,949.58
General Expenses	20,314.36	22,870.84
Youth Mission Trip	3,407.61	6,000.00
Per Capita Expense	11,181.45	11,181.45
Total Expense	\$275,650.99	\$302,324.13

Any questions about our finances may be addressed to Marcy Uhl, Treasurer or myself at any time.

Cheryl Dean, Finance Committee Chair

# Property Committee



January usually means a new start in a new year. We generally present our plans for maintenance projects, cleanup and updating that need to be done throughout the year. Instead, this year we want to encourage everyone to be a good neighbor and join a committee or small group to help our church move forward in 2022.

We have done well in our church over the years due to the encouragement of Pastor Charlie and the many people who have helped. He has helped those who needed help and did what he could for anyone that asked. It has always been a pleasure to talk to Charlie.

Jim Janis, Property Co-Chair

# Music & Arts Ministries

My thanks to all the music ministry for their glorious music this Christmas season! It is so great to be able to sing as a congregation and to have others join me live on Sunday morning singing and playing musical instruments. We are still researching to find what the margins should be in understanding this pandemic and striving to keep everyone safe but am so thankful we can sing joyful praises to our God in worship as a complete body once again!

A New Year ... New Beginnings ... A Time to Commit to Prayer

**II Corinthians 5:17** *'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!'*

**Ezekiel 36:26a** *'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.'*

**Isaiah 40:31** *'but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.'*

**Jeremiah 29:11** *'For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'*

A lot of great music has been inspired and written from verses such as above! More importantly, a lot of lives have been enhanced, encouraged, inspired, and changed through these verses. It is time once again to have quiet time, reflection, pray and be inspired.

I would like to thank Pastor Charlie for his tenure at Avon Lake Presbyterian Church, for his partnership in worship, and for his personal friendship. My heart grieves for what he is going through, but it is a time for new beginnings. New Beginnings for Charlie and his family. I pray that this next chapter blesses Charlie and his family abundantly. I pray Charlie finds time for trout fishing, for cooking, for writing, for following and supporting Henry in all his personal interests and endeavors. I pray that he and Debbie getaway, have a fun time, and that their relationship soars! I pray that Charlie and his mom, Beth, find times to reflect and laugh. It is an important time. I pray for the medical teams to continue to research and make Charlie a priority in that research. I pray for the Mayo team and this new stem cell research. I pray for healing. This is a new beginning for Charlie; that Charlie's ministry continues and the Lord will continue working through him. I pray for Charlie to be open to the endless possibilities.

New Beginnings for the Church. Yes, we are in mourning and uncertainty at the moment. But yes, this is a time of New Beginnings for us as well. It does not have to be a time of standing still for 2 years waiting ... so much can take place in experiencing God and what He has planned for us and this congregation ... may we be open and listen for Him. He will guide us and lead the right people to us for both the interim and beyond.



(continued on next page)

## Music & Arts Ministries (continued)

It is a New Beginning for each of us personally. I am reminded of a Stephen Covey Workshop on the **Seven Habits of Highly Effective People** I attended. In fact, that workshop birthed the name of TrueNorth Cultural Arts! In the workshop he stressed before we start filling out our schedules, define your roles; within each role define your goals; once that is complete you can start filling in your schedule by understanding and prioritizing your Roles and Goals for each. He said, it is as if your roles and goals are set with your inner compass to true north. I was in the middle of resigning from Bay Presbyterian Church at the time to start this new arts endeavor. I had my 5 Es set (to educate, equip and empower ... to envision and encourage ... but I had yet a name ... after the workshop I called my brother saying I think I have a name. I shared with Bob ... true north ... he said PERFECT! I told him my 5 E's need to be set to the compass of true north; plus, geographically we were true north on the lake; plus I wanted true north to be based on Christian principles ... true north ... only I wanted to be a bit artsy and make true north one word with a capital N in the middle ... thus TrueNorth Cultural Arts was established!

All this to say ... what are your roles and goals? This is the season for New Beginnings. Define each, commit to what is real and true or the time will just slip away, and we may be in holding way too long ... personally and as a church. What does a new beginning mean to you?

Here's to Charlie and his family ... Here's to Avon Lake Presbyterian Church ... Here's to you personally .... Happy New Year everyone!

Rick Fortney, Director of Music and Arts Ministries

## Mission Matters

*"When eating fruit, remember the one who planted the tree."* Vietnamese proverb

There are going to be some comfy babies thanks to Cornerstone Families!

Thank you for your donations for the Christmas Joy offering and the Christmas Eve offering for LCM.

It has been great to team up with Cornerstone Preschool, The Circle of Hope, and the Deacons this past year with a variety of projects.



In January, we are going to be collecting new winter gloves, mittens and hats for the Socks plus program. Adults and kids sizes welcome. Drop off will be at church January 16th - 30th. We have been blessed to be able to help people in many ways in 2021.



Although we were not able to host our renowned Lunch Bunch lunches we continued to provide support in many ways. Nine families received a holiday ham, thanks to the efforts of Kathy and Bill Hamilton. Great way to end the year.

Our goal continues to be to support the efforts of people in our church family to be a part of mission projects in a variety of ways. We meet the first week of the month at 4:15 at church. This month's is Wednesday January 5, at 4:15ish. Everyone is welcome to join us and to pass on suggestions for mission opportunities. Beth Janis 440-522-1771.

# What does God ask of us in the New Year?

## Question:

Don't you just love New Years'; a new year, a clean slate and we can start all over again?

## My Answer:

No, I don't like New Years' for any of those reasons. Now don't get me wrong, I like gatherings with family and friends. I do love the idea of realistic self- improvement too. Although, it does happen that we often leave repentance and prayer out of the mix.

It seems to be the focus on commercialism that rubs me wrong. You know, all the silly advertisements for exercise equipment that "anybody can use", the cologne that is sure to attract a new boyfriend, the adult beverage that is going to make you happy and anything else that promises to make life more perfect. What if instead of trying to change all our "failures" into perfection, we sorted out the things we are good at and thank God. God doesn't ask us to be perfect, only to do our very best.

It's a new twist for the new year, and I am going to try it.

Shalom,

Nancy Baldwin

February is heart month . The topic for the February My Story column in Saints Alive is:

What are ways people in our church family make you feel loved, liked or appreciated?

Please send your story to Cindi in the church office by January 15<sup>th</sup>.



## Barbara Schweitzer's story

### A New Year



When I was growing up, every December, my family would make plans for the new year. We'd look at maps and pick some places where we might want to travel - some new, some familiar. We would also include the names of family members and friends whom we wanted to see. Most years we were able to fulfill our plans. Those were always happy years.

In looking ahead to 2022, even though COVID is present, there are plans we can make. We know we are called to love our neighbor and that there are many ways to do that - keeping in touch, praying for our family and friends, and helping others whenever we can.

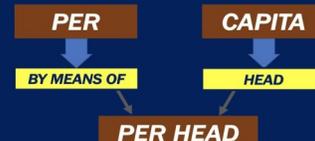
None of us knows what the new year has in store. But we do know we can count on God to be with us throughout. Thanks be to God!

## Per Capita

Because some of you asked, here is the Per Capita breakdown:

<b>Per Capita Apportionment:</b>	<b>Per Member</b>
General Assembly	\$8.95
Synod of the Covenant	\$3.25
Presbytery of the Western Reserve	<u>\$22.71</u>
<b>Total :</b>	<b>\$34.91</b>

### What is Per Capita?





# JANUARY

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

## Cornerstone Preschool

In October, I visited all the preschool classrooms for Chapel Time. We began by learning our basics. Through music and discussion, we start off each visit reminding each other that God made everything; and we are his most special Creation!

We learn that on Christmas, God sent his son Jesus to be born. Among the many things Jesus taught us, most important is that he loves us no matter what.

Next we review that the Bible is a special book full of stories about God and Jesus; and each month we will learn something new about how much God cares for us.

In October/November, our lesson focus was on being afraid and brave. We read the book, The Little Engine That Could. We learned that everyone feels afraid at times, it is normal; and God cares for us when we are afraid. We learned that when we feel afraid, we can tell someone and ask for help. These people can help us work through our fears. Working through fears makes us brave.

In November, our Chapel Time visits were about gratitude and expressing thanks.

Registration for our 2021-2022 Preschool classes is open now. Go to:

[cornerstone.childpilot.com/parents/inquiry](https://cornerstone.childpilot.com/parents/inquiry)

To begin your registration process.

Julie Erker, Preschool Director

Ken Mohr	January 1
Fran Asire	January 3
Mike Richardson	January 7
Richard Seib	January 9
Sharon Call	January 9
Elizabeth Shoemaker	January 13
Madeline Waggoner	January 14
Jenn Call	January 15
Julie Burr	January 15
Susan Richardson	January 18
Darlana Gallant	January 20
Tom Callahan	January 21
Bill Marshall	January 23
Michele Meehan	January 25
Deanna Domin	January 25
Jack Stryczny	January 25
Janet Parker	January 30

# *Everyone is Welcome*

**Sunday Worship** – Our worship service begins at **10:00 am**  
**Also on Facebook and YouTube at 10:00 am**  
Join us: [www.facebook.com/avonlakepc](http://www.facebook.com/avonlakepc)

Our worship service is now on the Avon Lake public access channels (1024 for Spectrum and 22 for WOW!). Sunday services will begin showing the following Wednesday, at 6:00 am and 6:00 pm and then show every day at those times throughout the week.

32340 Electric Boulevard, Avon Lake, OH 44012  
(440) 933-6240

Church email address: [alpresby@avonlakepc.org](mailto:alpresby@avonlakepc.org)

Church website: [www.avonlakechurch.com](http://www.avonlakechurch.com)

Preschool website: [www.cornerstonepreschoolal.com](http://www.cornerstonepreschoolal.com)

Church office hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday: 8:00 am—3:00 pm

## **The church office will be closed**

Every Friday,

Monday, January 3rd and Monday, January 17.

Pastor  
Director of Music Ministry  
Director of Preschool  
Financial Secretary  
Lock-up Custodian  
Office Administrator  
Treasurer

Rev. Charles E. Swartz  
Rick Fortney  
Julie Erker  
Lynn Morway  
Ed Homer  
Cindi Dansizen  
Marcy Uhl

440-522-5484  
440-724-7189  
400-933-7646  
  
440-231-3528  
440-724-7000

## *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.