

# Harmony Happenings

News of the People Who Are Harmony Evangelical Presbyterian Church

January – February 2020

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*Harmony Evangelical Presbyterian  
Church exists to boldly lead others to  
become followers of Jesus Christ.*

## From Pastor Jeff ...



I have a new grandchild. It is an amazing thing, to hold this child, to look into her face. You know what it means to encounter innocence. It is so beautiful and compelling. You can't stop looking at it.

Jesus was innocent. He was an infant in his mother's arms. She gazed with wonder at his face. Love and joy pierced her when he looked around and then at her. Her heart leapt when he squealed with that miraculous infant voice. Her experience was my experience, and yours. Yet, she also bore the wondrous burden of prophecy. The angel's words, the shepherd's witness, the wise men's devotion, surrounded her child. Each time she looked at him and was filled with a mother's love and awe, she also saw him complete, his story unfolded, his tragedy and triumph already backlit by word's and events.

So, what was it like for her (and Joseph) to look on their child with love, to see that innocence and know it was that very innocence that would take him from them and make him the Savior?

Jesus, we are told, was without sin. Where Adam failed (and where we all fail) he succeeded. His love for and obedience to his Father's will was complete. He did not turn aside from the cross. He loved his Father. He loved you. His innocence was perfected in the cross.

Just as we want to hold our children or grandchildren forever, to hold on to the holy beauty of that innocence, so we are called to hold on to Christ. Our children will grow up. And the seed of sin will sprout in their lives and grow. My granddaughter will need a Savior. Praise be to God for Jesus Christ. He is her Savior. He had no sin. There was no seed to grow in him. He gained knowledge. He experienced temptation, yet was without sin. His innocence qualified him to be our Savior. And he bore our sin on the cross, so that we could share in his innocence.

Have you ever held a child or grandchild in your arms and been overcome by the innocent perfection you gaze at? Have you wanted to hold on to that forever? Turn to Christ. Take hold of him. Let him take hold of you. He is not an infant. But he is innocent. And his perfect sinless love he would share with you today. Merry Christmas.

Soli Deo Gloria,  
Reverend Dr. Jeff Jones

# Focus on Missions

Supporting the Ministry of...

## Feed My Sheep Food Cupboard



**November Statistics:** Total Family Members~ 360  
Families: 156, Adults: 171, Children: 102, Seniors: 87  
New Families: 10

**Wish List for Christmas:** hot choc mix, marshmallows, sweet bread mix, sugar, oil, cake mix, icing

There are collection totes for your donations in the Fellowship Hall, and in the handicap/elevator entrance.

### *From the CCO Newsletter - Josh and Chrissy Hayes*

As year four of the Impact Program barrels along, the student leaders demonstrate their investment and growth. From kayak pool clinics, a fall break backpacking trip, multiple rock climbing trips and mountain bike trips, and team building sessions, Impact is impacting GCC!

The students take greater initiative this year in the design, implementation, and the instruction of our events. It is a joy to see them grab opportunities and run with them.

Freddy, a senior, planned and instructed two outdoor rock climbing trips.

Anna and Kurtis, a senior and sophomore respectively, designed and led our fall break backpacking trip with the theme *Backpacking as Discipline*. We covered some beautiful landscape in central PA and engaged in rich conversation. Backpacking leads to a more disciplined, Christ-filled life.

Johnny, a sophomore, planned and taught two exceptional sessions on mountain biking.

### *An Update from Hope For Renewal*

For the last 3 ½ years we have been committed to the day to day living out our mission statement in the neighborhood that God has called us to. We have witnessed God using the simple ways to serve to open the doors for relationships that have grown deeper and deeper over time. And especially this summer and fall we have witnessed the proclamation of the love of Christ manifested through word and deed.

Each prayer walk, every hotdog served, each container of soup, every act of kindness, each visit to a home, each work day at our building, each bag of candy given, every twirl of the jump rope, every bubble blown, every craft made, every wave and word spoken, each prayer prayed at a picnic table, each small group worship time, was used in God's plan to open the door for the love of Christ, the Gospel Message to be shared.

I would like to take a moment to thank all who read this and to have you know that God has used all of you in an awesome ways to proclaim the Name of Jesus as ambassadors for Jesus Christ in our precious neighborhood. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement and time given and your financial and material support.

## 2020 Mission Offering Schedule

Mission Offering will be collected on the second Sunday of each month excluding the months of Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas when Special Holiday Offerings will be collected.



## *Women's Ministries*

### Join the Women of the BBT Book Club

Books Breakfast Talk

Third Saturday of the month @  
9:00am @ Harmony

### *Quilting on Mondays*

*Mondays from 10am-3pm*

*Baby Quilts for Missions*

Bring your lunch and make it a day!

### **The deadline for the weekly bulletin is**

**Tuesdays at 8:00 pm.** The newsletter deadline for the March/April issue of the *Harmony Happenings* is Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. Thank you notes, articles, and information for the "News of the People" column need to be submitted in writing to the office or sent as an attachment to  
harmonyepc@zoominternet.net.

# Greeters Schedule



If you wish to serve as a greeter before and after worship, please call the church office and your name will be added to the schedule. If you are scheduled to greet and you cannot, notify the church office two weeks in advance; please call 724-735-2854 or you may also send an email to harmonyepc@zoominternet.net. Thank you!

## Greeter Schedule

Greeters may stand at any of the sanctuary entrances from 10:45am – 11:00am and at the close of worship. Greeters may be singles, couples, or families.

### January

- 5 Jon and Becky Miller
- 12 Dane and Carol Sloan
- 19 Joe and Patty Ridley
- 26 Ralph and Maggie Oakes

### February

- 3 Ron and Mary Lou Phipps
- 10 Pastor Jeff, Pam, and Family
- 17 Dane and Carol Sloan
- 24 Jerry and Harriet Grossman

### March

- 3 John and Marge Elmer
- 10 Veronica Norcross and Diane Hyatt
- 17 Joe and Patty Ridley
- 24 Pastor Jeff, Pam, and Family
- 31 Ralph and Maggie Oakes

### April

- 5 Ron and Mary Lou Phipps
- 12 Jon and Becky Miller
- 19 Ralph and Maggie Oakes
- 26 Dane and Carol Sloan

### May

- 3 Pastor Jeff, Pam, & Family
- 10 Jerry and Harriet Grossman
- 17 Veronica Norcross and Diane Hyatt
- 24 John and Marge Elmer
- 31 Ron and Mary Lou Phipps

Thank you to all who serve as greeters!

## Board Meetings

**Deacons** meet on the **Second Thursday** @ 7:00pm

**Session** meets on the **Third Monday** @ 7:00pm.

**Trustees** meet on the **Fourth Monday** @ 8:00pm.

## Birthdays in January and February

*Happy Birthday!*

**January Birthdays:** 5<sup>th</sup> – John Elmer; 6<sup>th</sup> – Imogene Sloan; 13<sup>th</sup> – Trilby Grivas; 23<sup>rd</sup> – Jon Miller; 28<sup>th</sup> – Mary Pepper; 29<sup>th</sup> – Diane Hyatt; 31<sup>st</sup> – Jonette Isacco

**February Birthdays:** 1<sup>st</sup> – Amber Flynn; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Joe Ridley; 7<sup>th</sup> – Teena Mershimer; 8<sup>th</sup> – Matthew Jones; 9<sup>th</sup> – Lydia Bowman; 14<sup>th</sup> – Debbie Frampton; 16<sup>th</sup> – Dave Rager & Harold Tribble; 20<sup>th</sup> – Janet Burnett; 23<sup>rd</sup> – Paisley Flynn; 24<sup>th</sup> – Gene McCandless & Kraig McFadden; 27<sup>th</sup> – Pam Jones

Please let us know if we missed your birthday. If you want to be added to the list, call the church office at 724-735-2854. Thank you.

## Upcoming Events

**Sue Garton and hand bells** leading worship  
Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>

**Treasurer Report Deadline** –  
Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup>

**Congregational Meeting: Part II:**  
Wednesday, January 29<sup>th</sup>

Dinner at 6:30 pm – Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. The meeting will begin at 7:15 for the purpose of reviewing the annual report and the budget.

**Evangelism Committee Events for the first half of 2020:**

- Jan 25 – Wild Game Dinner;
- Jan 31 – Community Soup Supper
- Feb 2 – Soup Luncheon;
- Feb 22 – Birthday & Board Game Night;
- Feb 28 – Community Soup Supper
- Mar 1 – Soup Luncheon;
- Mar 27 – Community Soup Supper;
- Mar 29 – Soup Luncheon
- Apr 4 – Show Night;
- Apr 24 – Community Soup Supper;
- Apr 26 – Soup Luncheon
- Jun 14 – Outdoor Worship Service at 10:30 am with Picnic following

*See weekly bulletin for more details.*

## *Expressions of Gratitude*

Dear Harmony Church,

Thank you all for thinking of me during my college career, I always enjoy reading the notes written in the cards along with the care packages that we receive! I also wanted to thank all of you for your help and support during my time as the church secretary. I have really enjoyed my time in the office.

Lindsey Flynn

Harmony Church Family,

Thank you for all your prayers, cards, visits, and soup during Lawrence's illness and end of life. We greatly appreciate and feel so blessed to have such a wonderful church family.

Erma Burrows & family

Dear Partners in Hope,

Thank you for your congregation's gift of \$453.00! Your thoughtfulness is a blessing to the many people who come to the Mission for help when they are struggling to get through another day. Because of you, our hungry and hurting neighbors are able to be blessed with a traditional Thanksgiving meal served at the Mission or a Thanksgiving basket filled with all the fixings to take home to their families. As always, the Mission's doors will be open to anyone who is in need of safe, warm shelter or spiritual assistance.

Thank you for making the holidays special for our neighbors in need!

Kevin Green

My friends at Harmony Church,

I am grateful for your continued partnership with me in this ministry. I value your fellowship, your prayers, and your great encouragement. Thank you for making this possible.

Love,  
Josh, Chrissy, & Baylee

Thank you so much for your very generous donation of the "Blessing Bags" and cash to the Feed My Sheep Food Cupboard. Your donation will help us to respond to the needy families in this area.

Gratefully yours,  
Shirley Osburn, Secretary

Dear Harmony Church,

Butler County ABATE and the Portersville Food Pantry would like to express our heart felt thanks for your amazing donation. It helped to make this years Toy Run a huge success. The funds raised will help provide a much brighter Christmas for our local families. God Bless You!

Cyndi Burns, Director

Dear Friends at Harmony EPC,

Your congregation's recent gift is already making a difference by providing food, shelter, and hope! I recently spoke to a woman who shared how when she became homeless, she felt alone, broken, and hopeless. Thankfully, someone told her about the Mission and she was able to receive emergency shelter at Hope Place, where her life was transformed. "I found the support I desperately needed at the Mission. I learned about God and realized that I was never truly alone or forgotten." Your gift is making it possible for people to hear the Gospel and find hope. That is why I want to thank you again for your generous support!

God Bless,  
Kevin Green, CEO

Please see the Thank You Card on the Bulletin Board in the church Fellowship Hall for handwritten expressions of gratitude from the ladies at the Hope Place!

## *The year was 1719. . . .*

The first permanent potato patches in North America were established near Londonderry (Derry), NH, by Scotch-Irish immigrants.\*Boston's postmaster William Brooker produced a newspaper, the Boston Gazette, which is America's earliest self-sustaining periodical.\*AND Joy to the World was written by Isaac Watts. Watts, a dissenting congregational Minister, wrote the song as a lyrical adaptation of Psalm 98. Joy to the World is meant to glorify the return of Christ and for all nations to celebrate that God has brought salvation to the world. Amazingly, Joy to the World was never written to be a Christmas song. It is a song that was written to celebrate the second coming of Christ. Watts had intended the song to be sung year round and not just during Advent.

The music to accompany this song was once thought to have been written by Frederick Handel. Most scholars today refute this claim. Some parts of the song are similar to Handel's The Messiah but the historical ties to him are weak at best. Today, most scholars believe that the music was actually composed by Lowell Mason in 1839. Mason was a prominent hymn writer during his life. It is also believed that Mason may have "borrowed" notes from The Messiah to compose Joy to the World.

While there is no historical reference explaining why Joy to the World has evolved into a Christmas song, it is easy to understand as you listen to it. This song is filled with a positive and uplifting message about the return of Christ. The emphasis that Mason uses with his exclamations (Joy!) to emphasize the celebratory nature of the song makes it a perfect fit for the Christmas season.

## *Specs*

I listen to Moody Radio at home. I recently heard this acronym.

There are five questions we can ask ourselves as we seek to apply the scriptures, using the acronym SPECS-

- S- Does the passage speak of any **SIN** to be forsakes?
- P- Is there any **PROMISE** to be claimed?
- E- Is there any **EXAMPLE** to be followed?
- C- Is there a **COMMAND** to be obeyed?
- S- Is there a **STUMBLING BLOCK** or hindrance to be avoided?

Thoughts to keep in mind while reading.  
-Becky Sopher

## *Announcements*

**FROM THE EVANGELISM COMMITTEE:** Not too late to sign up, male or female, for the “**cooking class**” to learn how to make soup in bulk. Please talk to Bernie Hooper for details as first class is in January 2020.

*Prayer and Devotional Time Continues in January* ~ January 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th at 10 a.m. ~ This time is set aside to “stand in the gap” through intercessory prayer and to share how God uses our daily devotions to speak to us; devotionals-of-choice includes *Our Daily Bread, Jesus Calling, My Utmost for His Highest* - or others, it's your choice. If you desire to gather for the Prayer and Devotional Time, please come for fellowship and to “stand in the gap”! *Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. -Matthew 18:19-20 ESV*

**Bible Study** is starting Wednesday, February 5th at 11:30 a.m. **Gideon:** Your weakness. God's STRENGTH ~ Seven-week study by Priscilla Shirer. See Becky Miller if you'd like a study book or more information!

Harmony Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
P O Box 406, 234 North Main St.  
Harrisville PA 16038

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Jones, Pastor

## Come & Worship With Us!

9:45 am – Sunday School

11:00 am – Worship

Visit us at [www.harmonyepc.org](http://www.harmonyepc.org)



### *The Christmas Manger*

In the Middle Ages, when few people could read and church services were all in Latin, other ways were found of teaching the Bible stories. A group of carved figures showing the baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the kings, and the animals of the stable was one means of telling the story of Jesus' birth, the nativity.

To St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order of friars, this was not enough. In 1224, in a cave outside the Italian town of Greccio, he set up a manger scene with real animals and live people. The Christ Child, though life-size, was made of wax.

On Christmas Eve, from the countryside all around, farmers and shepherds brought their families to marvel at the sight. St. Francis told them to put hatred from their hearts, and make Christmas a time of peace and goodwill. Then he led them in what may have been the first Christmas carols. He urged the children to gather around the manger as they sang.

People slipped bits of the manger straw into their pockets. Surely, they thought, straw of this kind would have the power to cure sick farm animals.

St. Francis had given new life to the *presepe*, as the manger scene is called in Italian. The same ceremony was repeated every year thereafter, and was copied in other towns in Italy. Then people began setting up manger scenes in their homes. From Italy the idea spread to Spain, France, and Portugal.

As time went on, the Italian presepe grew more elaborate. The rich used costly statues by famous sculptors, adding more and more figures. The Italian countryside formed the setting.

Some of these presepes are now in the world's museums. One of the most famous is in the Basilica of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Rome. It contains hundreds of wooden figurines, and measures forty-five by twenty feet. Done by famous seventeenth century artists of Naples, it shows what life was like around that city.

A Spanish manger scene, the *nacimiento*, always showed women washing clothes at a little stream. On a nearby hillside stood a Spanish bull. Spanish children sang and danced around the nacimiento to the music of the tambourine.

The nativity scene became the center of Christmas celebrations in southern Europe, just as the Christmas tree had in the north.

But German children of the Middle Ages had both a Christmas tree and a Christmas *Krippe*, as they called the nativity scene. The children sang and danced around the Krippe with such gusto that it often bounced. The church frowned on this "cradle rocking," but from it came a number of lovely Christmas lullabies.

From European countries the Christmas crib spread to England, but was never as popular there.

Today in Italy people shop for presepe figures just as Americans shop for tree ornaments. Even the poorest home has a presepe, with cardboard or plaster figures.

Children of France gather moss, stones, and greens for the nativity scene. In their country it is called the *crèche*. Every evening until January 6, the children gather around it to sing.

In Latin America, families set up their manger scenes in mid-December. Where Spanish is spoken, they are called *nacimientos*, *presebres*, or *portales*. People of Haiti use the French word *crèche*.

In the wealthier South American homes, the figures may be works of art, brought from Spain and handed down in the family. Sometimes the scene occupies a whole room. Viewers look in at the door.

The actual manger is often kept empty until midnight of Christmas Eve when the infant Jesus is "born." It is usually left up until Three King's Day on January 6.