

RUTHFRED HERALD

January 2019

Volume 29, No. 1

Dear Congregational Family,

As the fullness of this blessed Advent/Christmas Season is upon us, let me focus on five brief thoughts on the theme of **LIGHT** with you today:

1. **Advent Journey:** I trust that you are enjoying and being greatly enriched by our Advent Journey together this year as we “Celebrate the Lights of Christmas: The LIGHT of Christ!” We have been focusing on the themes symbolized by the candles of the Advent Wreath this year which are Prophecy/Hope, Bethlehem/Love, Shepherds/Joy, and Angels/Peace. I trust this has been a spiritually “enlightening” journey!
2. **Christmas Eve:** This is the centerpiece of our journey, as we light the Christ candle and celebrate Christ, “The LIGHT of the world!” This is one of the most beautiful services of the year as it is filled with the message of Scripture, sacred music, congregational singing, poinsettias, and the heart-moving singing of Silent Night while the sanctuary is lit up during our candlelight service. It is certainly a Holy Night!
3. **Epiphany:** The Church has long celebrated Christmas for twelve days (hence, the “12 days of Christmas” song), which then brings us to Epiphany (January 6). Epiphany is a long-forgotten holy day by the world today (and unfortunately by many churches as well). However, it was one of the earliest holy day celebrations of the early church—even preceding Christmas! Epiphany means “manifestation of God” or the revealing of God in Christ Jesus. The early church celebrated it as the ongoing mission of God to reveal Himself to the Gentile (non-Jewish) world. They were so concerned with sharing the Gospel Good News with the entire world! The coming of the Magi is central to the celebration of Epiphany as they are the first Gentiles to see the Christ-child. May this coming year be a year for each of us to see Jesus more clearly as we walk in His light!
4. **New Year Eve:** At the close of every year, I like to review the past year and prepare for the coming year. With the pressures of life, so many things crowd into our lives that we often lose focus on the most important things. Simeon, in the Bible is a good reminder to me of someone who kept the most important thing in life central throughout his entire life. In a sense, he has lived life backwards. His entire life was lived with the end point as its focus! As he holds the Christ-child in his arms at the temple, he announces that he can now go to his death in peace because he has seen the salvation of God, the light of the world. I want to live my entire life with my eyes focused on seeing the light of the face of Christ for all eternity!
5. **Study Leave:** I am so thankful to our council for granting me a four-week “study leave” beginning on January 7! During this time, I am going to be taking two intensive study classes for my doctoral program. The focus is on studying “The Mission of God’s People” as we think more comprehensively about what it means to be “incarnationally missiological” as God’s people, and as the church in the world. In Christ we are to be the light to the world.

Merry Christmas & Blessed New Year!

Pastor Steven Carlson

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The submission deadline for the next Herald is
Saturday, January 19, 2019.

The publication date is **Wednesday, January 30,
2019.**

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Member Profile

By Mettelise Ziegler

Beth and Tim Truax

Great relationships are often begun over a good cup of coffee. When mutual friends convinced Beth and Tim Truax to meet fourteen years ago, they spoke for hours at Uptown Coffee in Mt. Lebanon, finding themselves compatible in all sorts of ways.



From broken homes, Tim and Beth also struggled through first marriages and divorce. The only child between them is Tim's son, Caleb, brought into their marriage as a child, who has become very dear to Beth and is now grown.

Tim credits God for events that took him from the tough town of Clairton to the "peas in a pod" marriage he shares with Beth in Dormont today. Tim's alcoholic father made childhood difficult for everyone in his family. An uncle encouraged Tim to work for U.S. Steel in Braddock as a boilermaker. One thing led to another, and Tim started taking computer classes, finding he had an aptitude for programming. Tuition reimbursement made it possible for him to continue his education, which led him to the position he holds today at FedEx as a Systems Analyst Advisor.

Beth lived in DuBois until the second grade. There were three girls in her family splitting their time between their mother's and father's homes. Beth graduated from Carlow with a degree in Business Management. She has worked for Liberty Insurance in Manor Oak for a long time as Account Manager.

While Tim was growing up, his faith was encouraged by several people. His mother told him Bible stories. His brother, serving in the military, shared his faith with Tim. Sister Lisa very much trusted the Lord. Tim was taught and trained by leaders at the Bible Baptist Temple in Clairton.

Beth, on the other hand, came from a nominally Catholic family. When her mother married her second husband, she became active at South Hills Assembly in Bethel Park. Beth became a believer around the age of 28.

It was neighbors, Terry & Ellie Williams, who invited the couple to Ruthfred. Skeptical of organized, traditional churches, they were not sure what they would find. Several things impressed them. During the New Members Class, they learned that Ruthfred believes in the inerrancy of the Word of God. They esteem our vicar program, finding it uplifting to see men developing as future pastors. They enjoy studying the Bible during Sunday School and Journey Through the Word.

Tim and Beth know and recite many favorite Bible passages. Tim finds strength in the knowledge that God is strong (Isaiah 41:10). Beth's current favorite verse sums up how the couple approaches life together. Romans 12: 12 says, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." That is Tim and Beth Truax in a nutshell.

Official Acts

November 12, 2018 – December 9, 2018

Baptisms

- *Milena Turin Rigatti – December 2, 2018
- *Foster Douglas Sobek – December 9, 2018

Funerals

- *Janet Barger – November 26, 2018
- *Maggie Hatten – December 8, 2018

*Indicates Members

New Members – November 18, 2018

John Bender, Jr.
Rebecca Brown
Kathy Corazza
David Grafton
Ron Stout
Elaine Widich
Patty Willmott

Council Highlights

November 12, 2018

- Cheri Underwood noted that the Nominating Committee needs to find a new Sunday school superintendent as she will be vacating that position after serving four years.
- Rich Kleiser reported that all three funds were in a positive position thanks to generous giving.
- Council will be researching additional health insurance options for church staff in hope of reducing the cost.
- Council approved the following:
 - a) The transfer of \$10,000 from the Current Fund to the Benevolence Fund;
 - b) Donating the Thanksgiving offering to Voice of the Martyrs and City Mission;
 - c) Moving ahead with engaging Tim Beltz as a consultant to assist Ruthfred in strategic planning for its future;
 - d) Creation of the Legacy Plan to encompass both the Harris legacy and donations from interested Ruthfred members;
 - e) A proposal to elect two deacons as stipulated in the by-laws, with Council appointing an assistant deacon, who would be put forth by the Nominating Committee;
 - f) A study leave for Pastor Carlson for the month of January 2019; and
 - g) Amendment of the current by-law covering the Financial Committee to convert said committee to a standing committee. This will be presented to the congregation for a vote at the Congregational Meeting on November 19th.

Song of the Month

By Tom Glasser

Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken

Lyrics: John Newton

Music: Franz Joseph Haydn

On August 4th, 1725 in London, England, a little baby named John Newton was brought into the world. Seven years later in Rohrau, Austria, the Haydns announced the birth of a son, Franz Joseph. Whenever we sing the hymn “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” (SBH 152, 2nd tune) we get to enjoy legacies from both of these great men.

John Newton is, of course, the one you probably recognize from “Amazing Grace” fame. As a little boy, John was taught the Bible by his religious mother. When he was eleven, his mother became ill and died. At that point his rearing was left in the charge of his less-religious, seafaring father. John proceeded to go on six voyages with his father and continued on with a naval career after his father retired. “Espousing freethinking principles, he remained arrogant and insubordinate, and he lived with moral abandon.” (www.christianitytoday.com.) Certain turns of events even led him to become involved in the African slave trade, but the seeds his mother had sown were apparently not in vain. The Holy Spirit used them to finally convict him of his waywardness and need for repentance. Upon retiring from sailing and returning to England, Newton went on to become an Anglican clergyman and supporter of abolitionism. He also wrote many hymn lyrics, including “Glorious Things.”

Mr. and Mrs. Haydn thought that younger brother Michael had more promise for a good career. Franz Joseph was just not serious enough, always the jokester, but it was Franz, indeed, who went on to become one of the most prolific and prominent composers of the Classical period. He is even sometimes called the “Father of the Symphony” and the “Father of the String Quartet.” Later in his life he spent a few years living and working in London where his music was already very popular. While there he was accustomed to hearing the English national anthem and was impressed. So he decided to work on an anthem for his own homeland. That composition did indeed eventually become the national anthem for not only Austria, but Germany as well, and that is also the melody we now have for “Glorious Things.”¹

“Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” appears in our hymnal in the section titled “The Church/The People of God.” It uses many Biblical allusions and metaphors to describe the blessings and benefits of being a redeemed child of God. The primary allusion, however, is to “Zion,” and the hymn’s title probably derives from Psalm 87:1-3 – “On the holy mount stands the city he founded; the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob. Glorious things of you are spoken, O city of God.” Zion was the Jebusite mountain/fortress captured by David and made into Israel’s capital city. Over the centuries, the meaning of “Zion” has expanded and morphed. When Solomon’s temple was built, it included the temple area. It gradually came to refer to the entire kingdom of Israel. In the New Testament, “Zion” is used in a spiritual sense, referring to a heavenly kingdom for all of God’s people. (See Hebrews 12:18-24.)

Savior, if of Zion’s city I, through grace, a member am,
Let the world deride or pity, I will glory in thy Name.
Fading is the worldling’s pleasure, all his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure none but Zion’s children know.

¹ **Editor’s Note:** You might also recognize this tune as the University of Pittsburgh’s alma mater.

Announcements

New Year's Eve

On New Year's Eve, we will be celebrating the coming New Year together as a church family! We will begin with a short service in the sanctuary at 7 PM and then join together in the fellowship hall for a meal at 7:30. Brandon and Bekah are making their wonderful lasagna again this year! You are invited to bring a side dish to share. The evening will continue with games, fellowship, and a movie. It will be a casual time together and you are invited to stay as long (or short) as you wish. At midnight, we will be welcoming the New Year with prayer together in the sanctuary.

2019 Offering Envelopes

If you are looking for your 2019 Offering Envelopes, the few that are remaining have been moved to the Library, next to the adult Sunday School classroom. Shepherds may deliver those remaining after Christmas Eve to their flock members.

Church Council Ballot

The Nominating Committee has done a tremendous service to our congregation as they have been meeting together, fielding nominations, and contacting individuals of the congregation for different council positions. The Church Council approved the following nominations at the December meeting (a couple more may yet be added):

Financial Secretary	Connie Munn
Secretary	Leslie Gill
Sunday School Superintendent	Barb Harrold
Treasurer	Chuck Morrison
Trustees	Roger Kurtz Tom Eld Jennifer Hewitt Dave Paterra
Deacons – 8:30 Service	Gary Fisher Frank Fife
Deacons – 11:00 Service	John Welsh Dan Groves
Elders	Don Roose Ned Wellman Will Charlton

Announcements Continued

Mary Circle meets the second Saturday of each month at church at 9:30 AM. The 2019 Bible study for the Women's Circles is "Joshua" and all are welcome to attend. The December 8 meeting was a delicious pot luck brunch.












Pictured standing left to right: Judy Agnew, Connie Munn, Jan Ruzicka, Grace Motzer, Carol Hall, Mary Lou McKenna. Seated left to right: Betty King, Jill Kurtz, Sue Ritz, Mary Habovick. Photo taken by Bev Rowan.

XYZ will begin again in January with a speaker who has visited us before. Gary Gibson will come and share with us on a topic still to be determined. This will be an interactive time of sharing, good food, and fellowship. Mark your calendars for January 25, 2019 at noon. The sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board outside of Pat's office. Sign up today!

Sight and Sound Theater Trip

The time is passing quickly as we approach the February deadline to have our money in for the trip to the Sight and Sound Theater. The last day to sign up for this trip is February 24, 2019. For this trip to happen, we still need a good number of persons to sign up so please contact your friends and family. Let's see if we can experience "Jesus" together along with all the other fun things Norma Vogel has planned. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board outside of Pat's office along with itineraries. Sign up today!

JANUARY 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 6:30 Bell Choir 6:45 Jr. & Sr. Confirmation Class 6:45 JTTW/KidsClub 7:30 Senior Choir	3 	4 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	5
6 EPIPHANY SUNDAY Holy Communion 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Holy Communion 11:00 Holy Communion 6:00	7 JTTW Leaders Meeting 9:15 Craft & Sew 9:30 GriefShare 7:00	8 HAPPY 92nd BIRTHDAY JOHN BENDER 	9 HAPPY 92nd BIRTHDAY TO OLLIE WEIFENBACH 9:15 JTTW 12:00 Esther 5:45 Children's Choir 6:30 Bell Choir 6:45 Jr. & Sr. Confirmation Classes 6:45 JTTW/KidsClub 7:30 Senior Choir	10 HAPPY 92nd BIRTHDAY JEAN COOK Ruth 6:30 	11 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	12 Mary 9:30 
13 Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00	14 JTTW Leaders Meeting 9:15 Elders' Prayer Time 6:30 GriefShare 7:00 Council 7:30	15	16 9:15 JTTW 5:45 Children's Choir 6:30 Bell Choir 6:45 Jr. & Sr. Confirmation Classes 6:45 JTTW/KidsClub 7:30 Senior Choir	17 	18 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's 6:30 Keepers of the Faith	19 Herald Article Deadline
20 Sanctity of Human Life Sunday Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 Evening of Prayer & Praise 6:00 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AFTER BOTH SERVICES	21 JTTW Leaders Meeting 9:15 Craft & Sew 9:30 GriefShare 7:00	22 	23 9:15 JTTW 5:45 Children's Choir 6:30 Bell Choir 6:45 Jr. & Sr. Confirmation Classes 6:45 JTTW/KidsClub 7:30 Senior Choir	24 	25 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's XYZ noon	26 
27 Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 GIFT Bible Study 6:30	28 JTTW Leaders Meeting 9:15 GriefShare 7:00	29	30 HERALD MAILING 9:15 JTTW 5:45 Children's Choir 6:30 Bell Choir 6:45 Jr. & Sr. Confirmation Classes 6:45 JTTW/KidsClub 7:30 Senior Choir	31 Benevolence Meeting 7:15		

January 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	2	3	4	5
6 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm <u>@ Church</u>	7	8 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	9	10	11	12
13 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm <u>@ Church</u>	14	15 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	16	17 FLY Registration Party 6-9pm @ Church	18 TNT Ice Skating	19
20 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm <u>@ Church</u>	21	22 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	23	24 <u>Snow Tubing</u> <u>5-10pm meet</u> <u>@ Church</u>	25 Table Top Fri 6-10pm @ Church	26
27 Brunch Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm <u>@ Church</u>	28 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm <u>@ Church</u>	29 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	30	31		

Ruthfred Youth Ministry Calendar