ST. JOHN'S UMC EPISTLE

November/December 2021

Pastor: Rev. Chuck Cole

Editor: Pam Huggins

Dear St. John's Family,

I hope most of you have been able to take walks or a drive to enjoy the incredible beauty of this valley we are blessed to call our home! I debate every year which season is the most glorious to behold... Autumn or Spring. Pretty much a toss-up for me!

Each of these seasons usher in some very special times and events. Spring clearly is a welcome change from the winter, especially if it has been brutally cold and icy. It also gives us a time during Lent to reflect and prepare ourselves for Easter, reminding us of our loving God who offers us a "seat at his table" and eternal rest someday.

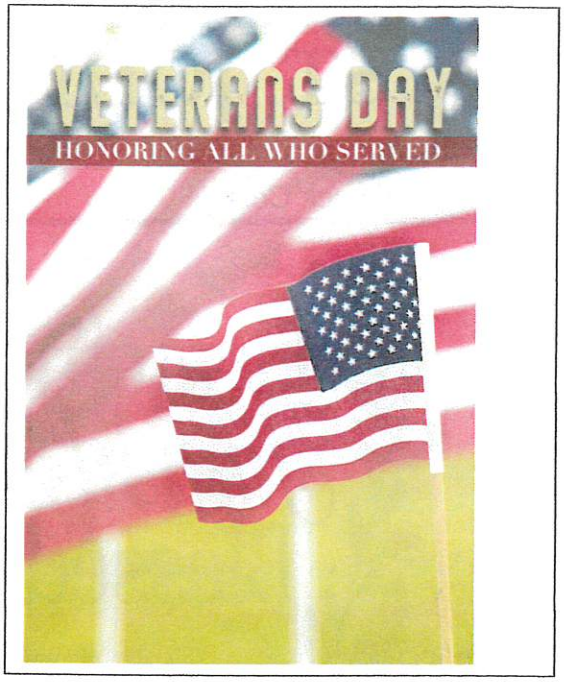
Autumn ushers in the season of Advent, another time of preparation for the Christmas story. So, the musical ear worm in my head is the song, "Anticipation," recorded by so many famous artists, Carole King, James Taylor, and (my personal favorite, Carly Simon. The opening lines are "We can never know about the days to come
But we think about them anyway."

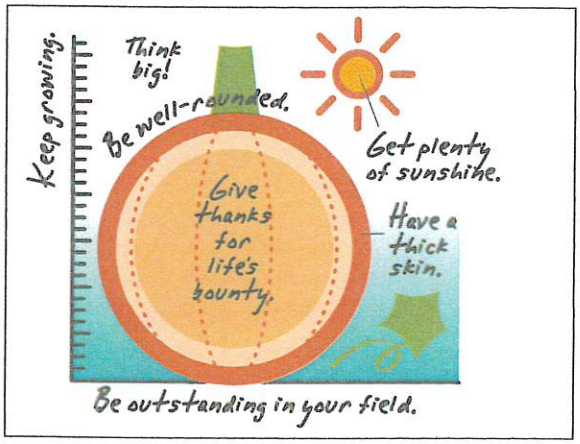
So we wait and we hope for clearer, bluer skies and better times to come, especially during these past, long months of COVID! Lately, it seems like there is always another shoe waiting to be dropped.

May this holiday season be the one that releases us from our fears and invites our "better angels" to spring forth.
I once read that Thanksgiving and the Christmas season are known to bring the best out of people. A little more love, a little more kindness, a little more generosity toward our neighbors... especially those with significant challenges, needs, and sorrows.

So, as the lyrics to the song suggest, we can never know exactly what lies ahead of us. But, we surely have many options for how we spend TODAY! As my family (my entire family plus some others!) gathers together, we are hoping to make Christmas more like Thanksgiving, by greatly reducing exchanging presents and greatly increasing the quality of our time together. Good food, games, maybe a little football watching, and less time on our devices. Wish us luck with that one!

Love to you all, Pam





November 7, 2021

From the Pastor

Brothers and Sisters of St. John's,

As we approach the month of November and December 1 Timothy 2:1-4 has been on my mind

"**2** I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— **2** for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. **3** This is good, and pleases God our Savior, **4** who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

These verses remind me to pray and to remember God's loving purpose for me and for all people - to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. It also reminds me that God is working out his love in the midst of what sometimes feels like an irredeemable hopeless mess - but for God there is noone and no situation that is irredeemable and hopeless. They help me to remember that in the words of *This is My Father's World* that "though the wrong seems oft so strong God is ruler yet". So let us offer up our prayers of Thanks with gratitude and our petitions and intercessions with confidence.

Sometimes the political life of our country may feel hopeless and like a mess. Here in Virginia we are at the tail end of an important election. Whoever wins each office here in Virginia needs our prayers that they might seek the Lord's will and do it. Continue to follow the call of 1 Timothy and pray for "kings" and all those in authority". That we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness". In other words so we are able to live as faithful disciples in every area of our lives. As we pray let us remember that however the future unfolds, God is at work for his good purposes in and through us. This is our Father's World.

November 7th we will celebrate All Saints Day a day to give thanks for those who have gone ahead of us in faith and helped us grow in Him. This year All Saints Day is also The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Let us pray for our persecuted Brothers and Sisters that their rulers' hearts would be turned such that persecution stops so that they can live faithful lives in peace. In the meantime let us intercede for them for protection, courage for wisdom how to continue to live and be witnesses in hard faith building circumstances. This is our Father's World.

In the US we will celebrate Thanksgiving Day on Thursday Nov. 25th. No matter the challenges we face as a nation and as individuals the evidence of God's grace surrounds us. Just as we might pray prayers of intercession when we hear a siren, let us pray prayers of thanks for those goodnesses that touch our hearts because they are a gift from the Lord. As we offer him prayers of thanks regularly, our eyes are opened to see more and more goodness in what sometimes just seems like a mess. Pray for open eyes to see goodness and beauty all around and let us offer up Thanksgiving. This is our Father's World.

Peace of Christ,
Rev. Chuck Cole

Joe Turner- New Shared Youth Director

Joe Turner is a graduate of Robert E. Lee High School and attended Eastern Mennonite University. He currently works as a PE teacher at the Minnick School in Harrisonburg. Joe is also one of the co-founders of a nonprofit basketball organization called Lace Em Up. Lace Em Up was founded in October 2020 and serves over 150 youth athletes throughout the Shenandoah Valley. Joe has two daughters, Kaylee and Kara. Kaylee is a senior and Kara is a freshman at Wilson Memorial High School. As a family, they enjoy outdoor activities together such as camping, boating and fishing. Joe is entering his 5th year as a coach for Eastern Mennonite High School and his 22nd year with coaching. At the beginning of Covid, Joe led church activities at Liberty Point Behavioral Health due to the residents not being able to leave the building. Also while there, Joe was a Mental Health Specialist and Adaptive PE teacher. Joe has a strong passion for working with individuals who have complex psychiatric and behavioral difficulties.

We are enjoying beautiful weather this fall with extended days outside on our playground. We are also learning about God's love for us during our weekly chapel times with Pastor Chuck. As Thanksgiving approaches it helps us realize how very blessed we are, so the preschool will sponsor its annual food drive during November to share our abundance with the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

Once we return to preschool after Thanksgiving the schedule is busy, busy, busy! The preschool will place a clothes line with clothes pins in our hallway in order for our children to hang: *hats, scarves, mittens, gloves and socks* to be given to children served by CASA. Our children will also be practicing daily for the Christmas pageant. Once again this year our Christmas Pageant will be a recorded performance. We will not be having guests at the pageant, but will instead be sharing our video with parents and caregivers. We will also spend time creating gifts and decorating our Christmas tree with handmade ornaments.

Wishing you all peace,
Jessica Welch, Director & Four Year Old Classroom Teacher
Donna Ellingsworth, Three Year Old Classroom Teacher
Rebecca O'Brien, Two Year Old Classroom Teacher

Operation Christmas Child

13 People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. **14** When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. **15** Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." **16** And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16)

The St. John's Preschool and the congregation of St. John's will be participating once again in Operation Christmas Child together this year.

Operation Christmas Child is a ministry where shoe boxes full of presents are packed here in the United States, and in many other places in the world, and then shipped around the world and given to children at outreach events. For many recipients their shoebox gift is the first gift that they have ever received and many ask "Why would someone give me a gift especially someone who does not know me?" The answer is because of the love of Jesus. These shoe boxes are a way of extending the arms of Jesus to embrace children around the world.

Each shoe box is filled with new items and they include toys, school supplies, clothes and hygiene items and if you wish a personal note. Accompanying each shoe box is a witness to the deep love of Christ for each child. In each box is a gospel booklet and the opportunity to learn of Christ and be disciples to grow in him.

Our goal is to pack 25 shoebox gifts this year one for each student in the preschool, Sunday School and who are part of the church community. There are three ways to participate:

Pack a shoebox personally by picking one up after church. In each box will be a pamphlet to describe how to pack the box. If you pack in person please return the box to church by Sunday November 22nd.

Pack a box online at https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline .

Another option is to give a gift to the church of $25 and we will pack a box for you. Whether you choose to pack a box or not please be in prayer for those children who will receive the boxes we pack that they will be a blessing to them. Pray especially that they will know the love of Jesus Christ and grow into men and women who know and love him with all their hearts.

August 29th, St. John's, Christ UMC and Jollivue youth gathered to eat with and hear from a missionary to Zimbabwe, Ian Fry, who encouraged the youth to boldly pursue Jesus as his servants. Ian Fry is the pastor of discipleship. If you are interested you can go to www.eden-ministries.org to see more.

A gratitude game

Years ago, ads for a toy-store chain featured an animated kangaroo jumping on a frown to turn it upside down. That reminds me of family life, which can feel like a nonstop attempt to keep everyone happy. Busy schedules, grumpy kids and tired parents can be a bad combination.

When our family needs to turn frowns upside down, we play the thankful game. The rules are simple: We take turns sharing one thing we're thankful for. Everyone plays. No one can pass. No repeats are allowed. Our kids, now teens, still chime in.

As we share gratitude for football, Grandma, hugs, warm brownies, coffee and more, kids tend to stop bickering, and adults get a mental reset. Try playing — and bring on lots of smiles!

—Janna Firestone

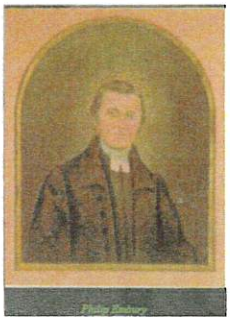
How to keep Christmas

Inspirational author Wilferd Peterson pondered ways to "best keep Christmas" and "defeat the little bit of Scrooge in all of us." After reading his suggestions, add your own!

- By following the Star ... to stand again in awe and wonder before the Babe in the manger.
- By rediscovering the faith and simplicity of a little child.
- By being still and listening to the angels sing within our hearts.
- By quietly evaluating our lives according to the Master's standards as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount.
- By resolving to give ourselves away to others.
- By using the light of Christmas to guide us through ... the coming year.

"I decided to give everyone on my list a 3-D printer and let them make their own gifts."

BITS AND PIECES – November - December 2021



Continuing with the early leaders of the Methodist church, I've come across some folks I've not heard of before. One is **Philip Embry** (21 Sept.1729 - Aug 1775). Philip was born in Ireland. He was the son of German immigrants who had settled in Ireland early in the 1700's. They had left German due to French Catholic raids and a harsh winter.

Philip learned a carpenter's trade and was converted on Christmas Day, 1752. He became a local preacher in 1758 and married Margaret Switzer that fall.

Due to rising rents and scarce land, he came to New York City in 1760. In common with other immigrants, he began losing interest in religious matters and didn't preach until 1766 when he was 'prodded' by Barbara Heck and he began holding services in his home on Barrack St. (now Park Street). This congregation was probably the first Methodist congregation in America, although there is a question whether preference shouldn't be given to Robert Strawbridge, who worked in Maryland.

The first Methodist church that was built under Embry's charge in 1768 on the present site of John Street Church. He actually worked as a carpenter on the building itself. He continued preaching there until 1769, when John Wesley sent preachers to New York and then Embry went to work in Camden Valley, New York, where he continued as a carpenter during the week and preached on Sunday. He organized along with others the first Methodist society within the boundaries of what is now the Troy conference.

Philip died suddenly due to a mowing accident and was buried on a neighboring farm. His remains were later moved to Ashgrove churchyard and finally in 1866 to Woodland Cemetery.

I've included this one because she was a cousin of Philip Embry and their lives were almost mirrored. **Barbara Ruckle Heck** (1734 - 17 Aug 1804). She was also the daughter of German immigrants who'd settled in Ireland. She married Paul Heck and they immigrated to New York in 1760.

Soon after her cousin and brother came to New York, according to some accounts, she entered a room where Philip Embry was speaking. She found some of the emigrants gambling at cards. She picked up the cards, threw them in the fire and charged Embry to preach to them.

Eventually the revival included a large number, Irish immigrants and a number of African Americans. She designed a simple chapel at John Street which was the group's first permanent location.

In 1770, the Heck's moved to Camden Valley. When the Revolutionary war started, the Heck's moved to Salem, New York to be near other loyalists and founded the first Methodist society in that district. Paul joined the army of Borgoyne and was captured by patriot solders. He escaped and made his way to Canada where Barbara joined him. They settled in Augusta and with others formed the earliest Methodist society in Canada.

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All Saint's Day, also known as All Hallows' Day, Hallowmas, the Feast of Saints or Solemnity of All Saints, is a Christian solemnity celebrated in honor of all the saints of the church whether they are known or not. In Western Christianity it is celebrated on 1 November.

This year we celebrate the following members who've passed this past year:

Vernon Garletts
Sandra Lee Cole
Robert "Bob" Young
Ursula Bibb
Doris Smith
Joe Hodges
Kathleen "Hope" Harmon
Richard "Dick" Pancake
Thomas "Tommy" Hamrick
Aubrey Painter

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The Candy Cane
(From the 22 Dec 1996 Bulletin)

The candy cane represents one of the oldest symbols of Christmas - the Shepherds Crook. The Shepherds were among the first to experience that first Christmas.

The colors of the candy cane have special meanings too. The wide red stripe represents the sacrifice of Christ. For with his stripes, we are healed.

The white stripe is a symbol of purity.

The narrow red stripe represents our own sacrifices (giving)

The peppermint plant is a member of the hyssop family referred to in the Old Testament as a medicinal herb for cleansing.

As you eat your Candy Cane, you might want to break it as Christ's body was broken for you, and share it with a friend, thus sharing in the sweetness of the true meaning of Christmas.

BITS AND PIECES – Nov. - Dec 2021 - Continued.

Thomas B. Hamrick
16 Feb 1933 - 1 Oct 2021

Tommy was another one of those whose kids grew up here at St. John's. He was one of those dads who everyone knew.

He was affiliated with Hamricks Funeral Home for years.

From what I knew, he was very outgoing and if you ever wanted to know anything about the history of Staunton, he was one you could go to.

Our prayers go out to Yvonne, Caroline, Linda and Karen.

Aubrey L. Painter
7 July 1923 - 13 Oct 1921

I still see Aubrey sitting on the left side of the church signing to John for the whole service. Aubrey was a teacher at VSDB for 38 years. I've been told he would also sign at community functions for no charge.

Even after he was unable to come to church, he was still interested in what was going on here.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING 25 YEARS AGO?

Pete Grim, long-time member of St. John's passed away 16 Aug.

Ruth Swenson passed away c Sept

Mission work team went to McDowell WV 1st week of Sept.

Oct 13, a special concert with Todd Allen Freneaux was held at St. John's

In Dec, there was a sock, mitten, hat tree that was put up. These items decorated the tree and were taken to DeJarnette's.

The play, "A Shepherd's Story" was held at St. John's on 22 Dec.

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WHAT WAS HAPPENDING 50 YEARS AGO?

The two-month Upper Room was available for 15¢.

Baptism and Membership services were held on the third Sunday of every month.

10th of October, Mr. George Polhill was guest speaker. The Chapel choir also participated in the service.

Joseph Christopher Sheets, son of Mr. & Mrs. Harold Sheets was born 7 Oct.

On 14 Nov, Rev. George Potts, father of Mrs. Long was speaker at the Sunday Service.

13 Nov, Douglas King Richardson passed away

Christopher David Layman, son of David & Sue Layman was born 5 Nov. Sue was the former Due Durrett.

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- Don't wait til the fourth Thursday of November to sit with family and friends to give thanks. Make every day a Thanksgiving.

- Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.

- It looks like the whole world is covered in a cobbler crust of brown sugar and cinnamon.

- To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to stand out in the cold.

- Christmas is a time when you get homesick even when you're home.

- May you never be too grown up to search the skies on Christmas eve.

- Seeing is believing but sometimes the most real things in the world are the things we can't see.

- Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas every day.

- When we recall Christmas past, we usually find that the simplest things - not the great occasions - give off the greatest flow of happiness.

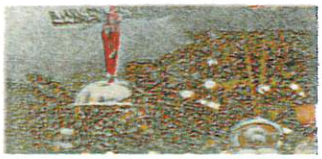
I wish each and everyone one you a thankful Thanksgiving and a very merry Christmas.

Cindy Phillips

NOVEMBER 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Happy Birthday to Molly Langston!	2 THE GOOD HABIT, 1:30PM CHRISTIAN HISTORY MADE EASY, 7:30PM	3	4 Happy Birthday to Pastor Cole! *LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY, 10:30-11:30AM*	5	6 Happy Birthday to Anne Frank!
7 *24th Sunday after Pentecost* 	8	9 Happy Birthday to Wilford Kirby! CHRISTIAN HISTORY MADE EASY, 7:30PM	10	11 *LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY, 10:30-11:30AM*	12	13
14 *25th Sunday after Pentecost* CHARGE CONFERENCE Following Worship	15	16 CHRISTIAN HISTORY MADE EASY, 7:30PM	17	18 *LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY, 10:30-11:30AM*	19	20
21 *Last Sunday after Pentecost*	22	23 **Pastor Vacation**	24	25 (CHURCH OFFICECLOSED)	26 Happy Birthday to Caitlyn Jackson!	27
28 *1st Sunday of Advent*	29	30 Happy Birthday to Joyce Herndon! CHRISTIAN HISTORY MADE EASY, 7:30pm				

DECEMBER 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 *LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY, 10:30-11:30AM*	3	4
5 *2nd Sunday of Advent* Happy Birthday to Mindy Hughes!	6	7 THE GOOD HABIT, 1:30PM CHRISTIAN HISTORY MADE EASY, 7:30PM	8	9 Happy Birthday to Willow Hughes! *LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY, 10:30-11:30AM*	10	11
12 *3rd Sunday of Advent* Happy Birthday to Cheryl Ryman!	13	14 CHRISTIAN HISTORY MADE EASY, 7:30PM	15	16 Happy Birthday to Riley Coleman! *LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY, 10:30-11:30AM*	17 Happy Birthday to Brent Taylor!	18 Happy Birthday to Mandy Crider and Erin Taylor!
19 *4th Sunday of Advent* Happy Birthday to Donna Jackson!	20	21 CHRISTIAN HISTORY MADE EASY, 7:30PM	22 Happy Birthday to Vicky Phillips!	23	24 SERVICE AT 7PM	25
26 *1st Sunday after Christmas Day*	27	28 CHRISTIAN HISTORY MADE EASY, 7:30PM	29	30 *LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY, 10:30-11:30AM*	31 	