

# ***"The Spirit"***

***Byron Presbyterian Church Nov - Dec, 2011***

## ***The Basics***

Sunday Worship begins at 9:45 AM,

Sunday School and Christian Education for young children during the worship hour.

Nursery Care during the worship hour.

Contact Pastor Jim Renfrew at [pastor@byronfpc.org](mailto:pastor@byronfpc.org)

***"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who have lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined!"*** Isaiah 9:2

## ***Holiday Season Happenings***

***Stewardship Dedication - Sunday, November 13, 9:45 AM - Please turn in Estimate of Giving cards today!***

***Community Thanksgiving Service at Byron Presbyterian Church - Sunday, November 20, 2:00 PM - Please bring in food items for the Batavia Food Shelf***

***Hanging of the Greens (for Advent) - Sunday, November 27, following 9:45 AM worship - A light meal will be served.***

***Christmas Pageant - Sunday, December 18, 9:45 AM - The real meaning of Christmas!***

***Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols - Saturday, December 24, 7:00 PM - Welcome the birth of Jesus with beautiful candlelight!***

## ***Moose Crossing Ahead!***

*"Hold on!", you say, "there aren't any moose around here!"* Well, you're right, but if you ever do see one in your headlights you'd wish someone had put up a warning sign.

You may not need our Prayer Chain most of the time, but when you do need it you'll be very glad we're here and ready to pray with you.

If a moose (or anything else unexpected) shows up in your headlights, our Prayer Chain people are ready. Please contact Laura Platt or Jean Roda to get the chain started.

## ***Choir News***

Can you hear them? That's right - it's the faint sound of someone singing ... could it be you?? I hope so. After a very long winter's nap and relaxing summer vacation, we're ready to get choir going again. If you are a "veteran" we hope you will come back. If you have been on leave of absence we hope you will return. If you have never sung in the choir, why not start now? Even if you cannot make every practice or Sunday - join in where you can.

We plan to have several weeks of practice and then start singing during Sunday services on November 20<sup>th</sup>. That afternoon (11/20) is also the Community Thanksgiving Service. It is our turn to host this event and we hope to have a good turnout for the combined choir.

If you are willing to join us please let me know either by phone or email. It helps to know numbers so I can plan music choices as well as the number of copies of music we need to have on hand.

Practice on Thursday nights:

Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 PM

Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7:00 PM

Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 PM Combined Choir 8:00 PM

Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 PM Combined Choir 7:30 PM

Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> - 7:00 PM

Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 PM

Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 PM

Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> - 7:00 PM

Sing (please be at church by 9:00 AM):

Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> Combined Choir 1:00 PM

Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve Service - 6:30 PM

*[Kim Dewey, Choir Director]*

## ***From the Pastor***

Dear Friends,

Thanksgiving is one of the most wonderful times of the year. Families come together. Food is on the table. Old stories are remembered, and new stories are made. What a wonderful time!

Some say it began as the Pilgrims' harvest celebration in the fall of 1621, when they gave thanks to God for seeing them through a time of severe hardship. But it officially began with a proclamation issued by President Lincoln in 1863, right in the middle of a bloody Civil War. In good times and bad we take time to give thanks to God for the blessings of our lives.

Thanksgiving is also known as a time to strengthen our resolve to deal with hunger and poverty. With a table overflowing with wonderful food we think about those who have very little. Lincoln's Proclamation includes a plea to care for widows and orphans. So we give thanks to God for the blessings of our lives, but we show thanks by sharing with those who are in want.

Thanksgiving is not a single day, it is a lifelong attitude. For this reason we work on the needs of the hungry year-round. Thanksgiving is personal, but it is also communal with a deep awareness that we are all in this together. Thanksgiving is music, as we sing praises for a good harvest and thank God for the food on our table. Thanksgiving can be uncomfortable, as we compare God's generosity with our own greed. Thanksgiving can be healing, as we remember how God is more interested in loving us than judging us. Finally, Thanksgiving is a prayer, an intimate talk with God about who we are, what we have, what we need, and what we have to give.

So ... let us pray: Dear God, your word to us seems so simple: "***if you have some bread, share it!***". But we have invented a thousand reasons not to, like: "*We don't have enough bread to share!*". "*We don't trust that others really need our bread!*". "*We'll only give it if they ask us for it nicely!*". "*If other people want our bread they have to become exactly like us first!*". "*We're scared of those other people!*". Yes, we have a lot of reasons. But even as we are well-practiced in our hesitation to share, we turn to you to inspire our generosity. You have the ability to transform a lifetime of behavior with just a small touch of your Spirit. You have a thousand reasons for sharing your bread with us and we are eager to learn your new way. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life". Though we may invent a thousand reasons to hold back, Jesus never fails to be generous with bread, with love, with healing, with justice, and with peace. One taste of his bread is enough to change us, and to change the world! Thank you, God! Amen! James R. Renfrew, Pastor

## ***Community Events***

***Crossroads House Annual Memorial Service*** of Remembrance and Renewal, Friday, November 4, 7:00 PM, St. Paul's Lutheran, Batavia. To include a name in the memorial roll, please call 343-3892.

***Fine Arts Festival***, at Batavia Presbyterian Church, with art show, international bazaar, lunch and bake sale, Saturday, November 5, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. On Sunday, November 6, 2:00 - 5:00 PM, there will be an art show, a musical concert and a reception.

***32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Turkey Dinner, Elba Presbyterian Church*** at Elba Fire Hall, Rt. 98, Thursday, November 10, 4:00 PM until sold out, take outs available, Adults \$9, Child 5-10 \$5, under 5 free.

***3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Harvest Craft Show*** (luncheon & bake sale), North Bergen Presbyterian Church, Saturday, November 12, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

***Pasta for Peace - Free Spaghetti Dinner*** offered by Pax Christi, Thursday, November 17, 6:30 PM at Batavia Presbyterian Church. Speaker local author Jim Morasco.

## ***Session Notes***

The Presbytery of Genesee Valley has awarded our church a small grant to cover the cost of a 3rd Natural Church Development survey (to be done in January), and to receive outside NCD coaching assistance.

The October 23 Turkey Supper raised \$2,875 and served 360 people. Very well done, everyone!

A team is working on a Sexual Misconduct policy for our church. The Presbytery now requires each congregation do this.

A new Form of Government has been approved by the Presbyterian Church (USA). Session is working on a smooth transition from policies and procedures in the previous Form of Government to the new version.

Session minutes are reviewed by Presbytery in the fall of each year. Mary Ann reports that only one small exception was found this time, on a matter that most other clerks missed, too. Good work!

Revised guidelines for church committees and committee chairpersons were approved. These will be introduced to each committee at the beginning of the new year.

Audrey Blount served as a first-time commissioner to Presbytery at the October meeting.

Our church will host the Community Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 20, at 2:00 PM.

## ***Deacons in Action***

Deacons are busily gathering supplies for Thanksgiving "Banquet in a Box" through the Salvation Army. Please bring in all food items by Sunday, November 13th.

Please support our ***emergency food donation*** box each week! Peanut butter, crackers, juice boxes, canned fruits and vegetables are always needed, as well as grocery bags. Food items are sent each week to the Emergency Food Shelf of Genesee County Churches United at the Salvation Army in Batavia. You may deposit items in the box at the back of the sanctuary, or in the grocery cart at the side entrance.

We have an active Nursery on Sunday mornings, and Deacons are providing an adult presence and a simple lesson, along with assisting teens.

## ***Preaching Themes for November-December***

NOV 6 Ephesians 1:1-10 "To the Saints"

NOV 13 II Cor. 8:1-15 "Out of Gratitude" Rev. David Franke will preach on November 13.

NOV 20 Ezekiel 34:11-16 "I Seek My Sheep"

|        |                |                           |
|--------|----------------|---------------------------|
| NOV 27 | Psalm 80:10-7  | "Restore Us, O God"       |
| DEC 4  | Isaiah 40:1-11 | "Voice in the Wilderness" |
| DEC 11 | Luke 1:26-38   | "An Angel Visits"         |
| DEC 18 | Luke 1:46-55   | "Mary's Song"             |
| DEC 25 | Isaiah 52:1-7  | "Peaceful Messenger"      |

## ***Community Relief Team***

A Byron-Bergen Community Relief Team involving people from local churches is forming. One group has already been down to Binghamton to help with flood clean-up, and there is interest in being ready to respond to other emergencies in our area. If you would like to be involved, or, better yet, represent our church at occasional meetings, please call Diane Strock, North Bergen Presbyterian Church.

Emergency tote kits are being assembled to be brought to Binghamton on Nov. 21. The following items are needed (small sizes, please): toothbrush & toothpaste, hairbrush & comb, shampoo, tissue, lotion, bar soap, band-aids, compact laundry soap, deodorant, handi-wipes, sanitizer, vaseline, duct tape, tool kits. Items may be left by the church office.

## ***Tables & Chairs***

Folding tables and chairs may be loaned to church members free of charge. Non-members are charged a fee of \$5 per table plus \$5 for each set of eight chairs. Those wishing to borrow these must make arrangements well in advance with the Church Secretary, New chairs are not available for borrowing.

## ***We Get Letters***

*"Thank you for your recent donation to the Byron Rescue Squad. The money will be used for continuing education for our medics and supplies for the ambulance. Your thoughtfulness in honoring our local members, and those who served or lost their lives on 9/11/01 will be remembered."* Kathy George, Secretary, Byron Rescue Squad in a letter to the Byron Presbyterian Church Youth Group

*"This year marked the final field season of the Byron Dig, the Ice Age excavation that the Buffalo Museum of Science has run in your community for the past 29 years. In one way or another, your congregation has been part of my experiences through all that time, beginning in the early '80's with a lecture/dinner in your basement. Charlie Hiscock was with us, and the wonderful Britt Family was doing the serving.*

*My mental associations with the First Presbyterian Church of Byron are uniformly good ones, and I want to thank every one of you for that. You're very special people, and I pray that Providence will always be kind to you, as you so richly deserve. With Thanks and Affection, Dick Laub"* (Dick, who is retiring this year, brought dozens of volunteers to Byron each summer)

## ***Thank You!***

The annual Turkey Supper was held on Sunday, October 23rd. Many thanks to all the volunteers that made the dinner a success! Through generous donations of goods and services and lots of hungry people (who found us through our excellent advertising) we were able to show a profit of \$2800.00.

As a side note, the Turkey Dinner has been a fund-raiser for our church for over 60 years! It is one of our time-honored traditions and has special significance because it really takes a "village" to pull it off. As we wandered from ticket sales, to dining room, to kitchen, to pie room, to take outs it was a very special feeling to watch so many people from our congregation working together. Listening to the laughter and conversation as people worked was truly watching generosity in action.

We humbly thank you for all your efforts.

Pam Kenward, Jan Kent, Kim Dewey

## ***Mission News***

Thanks to all who have supported the Backpack Project - individuals, families, churches, the Byron-Bergen Teachers Association, and schools and community organizations in the School District. Due to the generosity of many, during the 2010-11 school year we provided backpacks to approximately 30 students. The backpacks continued during the summer with delivery made to individual houses. We offered the service to families that received the backpacks during the 2010-2011 school year and delivered to 10 children for the summer months. Each weekend a backpack filled with nutritious food is sent home with the a child from each family. This year, we are supplying for 24 children, but that number may increase during the school year.

Food items needed continuously are individual entrees (microwaveable), 100% fruit juice boxes, individual fruit cups or applesauce cups, granola and cereal bars. To drop items off, or for more information, please contact Pam Kenward. Monetary donations can also be sent to the Byron Presbyterian Church--please indicate on the check "Backpack Program". *[Pam Kenward]*

## ***Bible Study - Why?***

Why? Why should you be interested in reading and studying the Bible? Not everyone is Christian or necessarily believes that the Bible is the true word of God. Even for non-believers, and those who may have differing views of the Bible itself, there are compelling reasons to read and be familiar with it. Here are just a few.

### General Cultural Knowledge

The Bible is rich in information and history that is woven into the fabric of our culture. Not only in the Christian religion, but in music, law, art, philosophy, literature, language, and other religions are numerous references to, and phrases, sayings and ideas from, the Bible.

### Understanding and Contending with Critics

In our own country, as well as world-wide, the Bible and the Christian religion seem to be under constant attack. More often than not the Bible is quoted out of context or totally incorrectly altogether. Having personal, firsthand knowledge of what it really says, and in what context, can help one to understand current criticisms and answer intelligently when need be.

### Personal Improvement and Enlightenment

This of course is a given for believers but the Bible can be surprisingly edifying for non-believers, or those in between. Moral dilemmas, difficult situations, and hard choices are part of most people's lives at one time or another. Stories that parallel our own life situations can often be found in the Bible along with the solutions beneficial to both Christian and non-Christian. Proverbs contains a wealth of ideas to assist anyone in living life as it should be, whether the individual has come to Christ yet or not.

### Improving Our Walk with God

For Christians, reading His word is one way we come to know God and understand his plan for us. The Bible is our instruction book. We strive for a relationship with God and part of that relationship is dialog. Many people claim they can't hear God. The Bible is one way that God speaks to us. If you want to hear God, just read the Book. Going into our 3<sup>rd</sup> year, we have had an excellent response to our Bible Study. We've explored various books, topics, and passages and been enriched by the generous sharing of questions and understanding by all those who have participated.

This year we have been devoting our time to reading and discussing the particular passage that Jim is going to preach on the following Sunday with the hope that we will be better prepared to understand and profit from his sermon. We are currently meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at the church at 7:00pm. Please join us!

[Jim Moore]

## ***The Giving Tree - 2012 Stewardship Appeal***

"Generous" - definition: "*characterized by a noble or fore-bearing spirit*"? During the fall, we have been talking about generosity and members of the congregation have given testimonials to generous or "*noble*" people they have met in their lives. We've heard stories of giving and of receiving, of people reaching out and touching someone's life without conscious awareness of doing so! Acts of generosity have ranged from the incredible gestures that save lives, to monetary gifts, babysitting, and things as simple as making a new person feel welcome during greeting time at a Sunday service.

We have created tangible evidence of the *noble and fore-bearing spirit* of our congregation and the wider community with experiences of generosity and hopes for a future of continued giving written on paper leaves. These leaves have been hung on a "Giving Tree" in our sanctuary. The bright colored leaves are a reminder that God has placed us on this earth to be stewards to each other.

We have created a church history timeline that wraps around the sanctuary. You can see the amazing acts of giving and sharing that have gone before us right up to the present day. We are also excited to share with you a "Narrative Budget" for 2012. It goes far beyond a spreadsheet of numbers to tell the story of how we have been faithful in the past year and how we anticipate sharing the blessings of Jesus Christ in 2012. (To see a copy of the Narrative Budget, please visit our church web site)

Take a moment to think about the "leaves of generosity" that have impacted your life and take a moment to ponder what you would like the "Giving Tree" of the future to look like? Together, with all of our gifts - of time, of talent, of monetary support, - we can create a giving tree that reaches to the stars and that is so laden with leaves of generosity it sweeps the ground.

In case you missed it, a 2012 Commitment Card is included in this newsletter on Page 8. Thank you!

*Stewardship Committee*

## ***Byron Presbyterian Church - 2012 Estimate of Giving***

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

As a reflection of my faith in Jesus Christ, and my commitment to his church in this community, I plan to offer financial support for the ministry and mission of the Byron Presbyterian Church in 2012 as follows:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] weekly [ ] bi-weekly [ ] monthly [ ] annually (please check one)

Please fill out this Estimate of Giving card and to return it to the Byron Presbyterian Church (attention Stewardship Committee), PO Box 206, Byron NY 14422-0206, or place it in the offering plate. Thank you!

[ ] I prefer not to make an estimate of giving at this time, but please provide me with a box of 2012 offering envelopes.

## ***Thanksgiving***

*Thanks to one and all for supporting our Parking Lot Paving Project!*

*Thanks to everyone in Byron and Bergen - individuals, families, churches, schools and community organizations - for lending support to the Backpack Project.*

*Thanks to those who have added to our Giving Tree wonderful stories of generosity in action.*

*Thanks be to God for these and many other blessings! Amen!*