



# Providence Post

DECEMBER 2024

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## Preparing for Christmas During Advent



**FROM OUR  
PASTOR**

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In December, we will be observing Advent, a season of four weeks when we prepare our hearts for the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ at Christmas. The word “Advent” means “coming” – it is a season of preparing for the coming of Christ to earth. During this season, we read verses from the prophets who foretold of the Christ’s coming in ancient times. We light candles, one for each week of the Advent season. As the days grow darker and colder, Advent symbolically reminds us that God is shining his light into our troubled and fallen world. All that is shrouded in the darkness of sin, suffering, violence, fear and death will soon be flooded with the light of Christ’s love and redemption.

Advent prepares us once again for Christ’s first coming to earth as a humble baby born in a manger. Yet, Advent also points forward to Christ’s second coming, when he will come in judgment and triumph. Advent reminds us that we are living in this sometimes painful period between Christ’s first and second coming – the “already” and the “not yet.” We affirm that Christ is already present with us, yet the world is still clearly not as it ought to be. We hear stories on the evening news about mass shootings, terrorist attacks, devastating natural disasters, and threats of war. We see that our society is still bitterly divided over cultural and political issues. Advent is a season that gives us hope that God is working to put the world right – bringing his kingdom fully here on earth as it is in heaven. Advent reminds us that God did not leave us alone in our troubled world, but sent his only Son, Jesus the Christ to redeem and heal us. Advent gives us hope as we wait for the Lord’s full redemption at the end of the age. Advent also gives us the courage to act on this hope, working for goodness and justice in our world, advancing God’s kingdom until it comes in fullness.

A contemporary Advent hymn proclaims, “Though dark the winter and cheerless, the rising sun shall crown you with light. Be strong and loving and fearless!” Jesus, the Light of the world has come, and is indeed coming again! May this give you hope and courage this Advent season and always.

*Pastor Hilary*



# Session Highlights

**By Barb Hazlett**

*(Note: The following highlights are taken from the minutes of the Monday, November 18, 2024, regular Session meeting.)*

**Clerk’s Report:** Seventy-five communicants received communion on Sunday, November 3.

Lundyn Treese passed away on Sunday, October 27, 2024. Later that day, there was a request to hold a vigil for her on Wednesday, October 30, at 7:00 pm, in the church parking lot. Session was contacted by email for a vote and almost immediately there was a yes response from the elders.

A second request was made to allow an email to be sent to the congregation asking for donations to help defray funeral expenses for the Treese family. Again, Session elders responded to this request in the affirmative.

The clerk reported that at the recent audit, our Session books were found to be in good order without exception.

**Treasurer’s Report:** The treasurer distributed the budget for 2025; several items were discussed and the budget was approved as presented. This budget will be presented at our congregational meeting on Sunday, November 24.

**Huntingdon Presbytery Report:** The most recent meeting of Presbytery was held via Zoom. Pastor Livingston and Rick Herbster were in attendance. Rick gave a brief description of the meeting. The next meeting of Huntingdon Presbytery will be held in January and will focus on changes proposed by our General Assembly.

**Nominating Committee Report:** The slate of new Session members will be presented to the congregation at our congregational meeting on

Sunday, November 24.

**Moderator’s Report:** Pastor Hilary thanked the Session for allowing her to take a few days off.

She has visited people in the hospital and has done some home communion visitations. Pastor Hilary officiated at the funeral service for Lundyn Treese.

Pastor Livingston will now lead the Thursday Bible study group and has participated in Session team meetings. She would like to be involved in personnel clearances after the first of the year.

## Session Team Reports (Chair)

**Finance & Stewardship (Sue Whitsel):** The 2024 per capita amount has been established at \$39.24. For the period ending on October 30, 2024, there was \$3,757.06 paid into the per capita fund, up slightly from \$3,717.82 on September 30.

The Presbytery of Huntingdon at its September 24, 2024, meeting, approved a per capita rate for 2025 of \$27.76 for the Presbytery; \$2.40 for the Synod of the Trinity; and \$10.84 for the General Assembly for a total of \$41.00 per member. This represents a 4.5% increase from the 2024 per capita rate.

Members who pledge to the church were asked to return their Estimate of Giving cards on or before Stewardship Sunday, November 10. A total of 42 giving units have pledged \$153,320.

The Monthly Financial Summary is shown below:

	Through 10/30/24	Through 10/30/23
Congregational Giving	\$156,196	\$153,638
Building Rental Income(*)	16,669	1,267
Special Offerings	12,129	11,461
=====		
Total Income	\$184,994	\$166,366
Total Expenses	\$184,028	\$196,893
=====		
Surplus (Shortfall)	\$ 966	\$ 30,527

(\*) Reflects giving to the “Organ Fund”

**Congregational Care (Gail Irwin):** The team received thank-you notes from congregants who have received cards and “Thinking fo You” treat bags.

Coupons were mailed to the Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan in November. Our thanks to all the

faithful coupon clippers who continue to support this project.

The schedule for cards/flowers/transportation was updated for the months of November and December.

The next cycle of communion for the homebound is scheduled for November. Pastor Livingston setup the November schedule; she coordinated with the members of our committee who are available to accompany her. Approximately 10-12 congregants have requested communion or visitation.

Birthday cards, get-well cards and missing-you cards were prepared by our team members for November. Names for the congregation card shower were designated.

Planning has begun for several Christmas season projects. The Advent Dinner will be held on Sunday, December 8; meals will be delivered to homebound congregants. Holiday cookie trays will be assembled and distributed on Sunday, December 15, to select congregants. Angel Tree gifts will be delivered on that date to select residents who are in need at the Presbyterian Village.

**Congregational Fellowship (Glenn Nelson):** There will be no coffee fellowship on December 1, because of the Advent Dinner, which will be held on Sunday, December 8, 2024. John Gallace will oversee the meal for this dinner. The Fellowship team will supply drinks, dessert, and decorations.

Our coffee fellowship on Sunday, January 5, 2025, will be cheese and crackers.

**Mission (Judy Hartzell) :** Our team received acknowledgments of donations from the Mountain Lion Backpack Program and the Healing Patch/Home Nursing Agency (UPMC).

The 2024 Peace & Global Witness offering allows our church to keep 25% of the total received. Our team decided that our share should be sent to the Presbyterian Disaster Relief Fund to help with hurricane recovery.

The Christmas Joy Offering will be collected in December. *[See the special article in this newsletter.—Ed.]*

We served 24 guests at the October 19 Soup on Saturday event with the help of ten volunteers. Leftovers were donated to the Altoona Teen Shelter. In November, 36 people were served at the SOS event. Allen Gibboney's woodwind group will be playing at the December Soup on Saturday. In addition, Providence Church youth will be decorating cookies to give to each guest at this event.

Community Donations for December: Altoona Food Bank - mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy. Providence Food Pantry - donations of nonperishable food items and personal care items.

**Outreach (Jane Yerty):** The Veterans Day Card Making event was very much enjoyed by the 15 people who attended. The cards were thankfully received at the Hollidaysburg Veterans Home.

The Garden is closed for winter. We are happy to welcome Deb and Mike McClain to oversee our Community Garden and gratefully acknowledge Nancy Woomer's many years of service and vision in this ministry. Happy retirement Nancy!

Our team plans to prepare 24 welcome bags for new worship attenders in time for the Advent season. We also expressed concern regarding the state of picnic tables on the Beale Avenue side of our garage. Should we repair or replace them? Are they used? Is unsafe in their current condition?

The young adults would like to do a Santa's workshop with gently used toys on Saturday, December 14. They would need to use the Fellowship Hall for the week prior to this event. *[See the "North Pole Toy Drive/Giveaway" article in this newsletter.—Ed.]*

**Property (Geoff Geesey):** Everything went well on the "Phil Hall" cleanup day on November 18.

The damage that was done to our garage will be appraised by our insurer during the week of November 18.

The Altoona Water Authority is doing a survey of lead pipes in the Altoona area. They will send a representative to look at our water lines.

**Spiritual Enhancement (Jeanie Mollica):** There will be a Gratitude Game Night for the youth on

Saturday, November 23, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

**Worship (Rick Herbster):** Acolytes, liturgists and ushers are set for November.

The Audio/Video (A/V) Task Force has been formed and will meet to discuss some of our needs.

Rick commented that Pastor Livingston has done a lot since she has arrived at Providence, such as World Communion Sunday, Reformation Sunday, her Installation service, and other services.

Christmas poinsettias will be ordered from the Piney Creek Greenhouse in Martinsburg. Order forms have been included in the worship bulletins.

Kevin Luke has been contacted to repair some of our musical equipment. He suggested that we call an electrician to check on an electrical outlet that may be faulty.

The team discussed paying the people from out of town who assisted with the installation service. We feel that the only person that should be compensated is the main speaker at that service. Pastor Livingston will be contacted to see what her thoughts are.

**Advent Planning:** We will make a candle inventory and order whatever is needed. Pastor Hilary will be using a series by Kate Bowler to develop her sermons, the Thursday Bible studies and the Advent readings (which will take the place of the Call to Worship). Our team will find people to do the readings. Some Christmas carols will be sung during the third and fourth Sundays of Advent.

The Brass Quartet will play during the service on December 8, and the Wopsonnock Winds will play on December 22. The Christmas Eve service will feature a prelude with varied selections at 6:00 pm; the actual service will begin at 6:30 pm.

Holiday Calendar:

November 30: (Saturday) Decorate the church for Advent at 9:00 am

December 1: Communion/First Sunday of Advent

December 8: Second Sunday of Advent, "Holiday Fashion", Advent Dinner

December 15: Third Sunday of Advent

December 22: Fourth Sunday of Advent

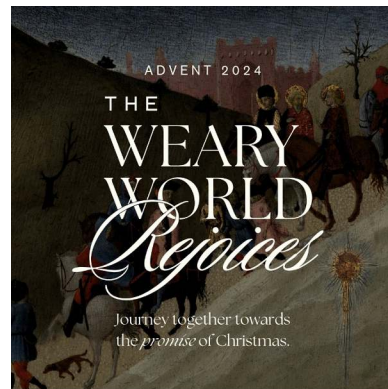
December 24: (Tuesday) Christmas Eve Service, Prelude at 6:00 pm, Service at 6:30 pm

December 29: We will discuss this service at our meeting in December

January 5, 2025: Communion/Epiphany Sunday/ Undecorate the church following the worship service

**Old Business:** Last month, B.J. Crownover spoke to the Session about old documents and photographs from the various churches that have combined to form Providence Church. She asked if the Session would give her permission to have these documents scanned and placed on a thumb drive for the Blair County Genealogical Society. Session gave her permission to do so. Carol Adams asked what we want to do with the original copies. She informed the Session that the society has the room to store this information if that is what we want to do. Also included with the documents is a book, "A History of the Presbytery," which will be given to Janet Kephart at the Huntingdon Presbytery.

**New Business:** There will be an interfaith service at the Temple Beth Israel on Thursday, November 21. Pastor Livingston won't be participating in the service, but will try to attend.



During Advent, Pastor Hilary will be preaching a sermon series based on the lectionary texts and insights from writer Kate Bowler and her study, "The Weary World Rejoices." Pastor Hilary will be leading a small group discussion on

the themes of this series on Thursday mornings at 11:30 am. Join us for this special Advent series beginning in December at Providence Presbyterian Church!

(Article continues on the next page)

*“The days leading up to Christmas (we call this season Advent)...It’s a promise that is coming, as surely and steadily as light traveling from a distant star. It is the promise of a return—a restoration of all things to their true being, a goodness which was conceived from the beginning of time, a realized hope we’ve been longing for. For the “days are coming,” say the prophets of old. “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will fulfill the good promise.” The promise of truth, compassion, restoration, and justice.”—Kate Bowler, “The Weary World Rejoices” © KATEBOWLER.COM*

## Family Services December Donation Needs

Providence Presbyterian Church is collecting the following items for Family Services on the second Sunday in December. Items may be left on the designated shelves located in the 24<sup>th</sup> Street hallway adjacent to the Fellowship Hall.

### Category: Holiday Items

Holiday gifts for infants, children,  
teens and adults  
Gift cards for local stores  
Crayons/Markers/Play dough  
Disinfectant wipes  
Facial tissues  
Pajamas (all sizes)  
Craft supplies  
Slippers  
Warm socks for kids and adults  
Ice & snow melt (salt)

Watch for a new donation category in January 2025!



**Congregational Meeting:** A congregational meeting was held following the morning worship service on Sunday, November 24. Pastor Hilary Livingston, moderated the meeting.

Geoff Geesey, chair of the Nominating Committee, announced a slate of three elders for the Session class of 2027: Bruce Hazlett, Heather Wisor and Amanda Yeager. A motion was approved to elect the three candidates.

Geoff then presented three members of the congregation-at-large for the five-member Nominating Committee of 2025: Paul Conway, Barb Weigley and Gaylend Young. A motion was approved to elect these three members to the Nominating Committee.

Pastor Livingston introduced the treasurer, Barry Gaut, who reviewed various sections of the 2025 budget and explained the decrease in the amount of Pastor Livingston’s benefits plan. A motion was approved to receive the budget and approve the new total amount of the pastor’s terms of call. There was no old or new business; Pastor Livingston adjourned the meeting with prayer.

**Per Capita:** As the year winds down, please remember that the Per Capita amount for 2024 is \$39.24 *per member*. If you have not yet paid your per capita, please use the special [blue envelope](#) in your box of offering envelopes to do so.

**2025 Tithing Envelopes:** New offering envelopes will be ready on Sunday, December 1. The boxes will be located on a table in the Fellowship Hall. They are arranged in alphabetical order and have your name on top of the box. If you can’t find a box with your name on it, please call Kimberly (814-944-7258), and she will have your envelopes ready for pick-up on the next Sunday.

**Session Team Reports:** We are asking all Session members to please submit your report from each ministry team to Kimberly by Wednesday, January 15, 2025. These reports will be included in our annual report, which will be distributed at the February 2025 Congregational Meeting.

**Christmas Eve:** This year’s Christmas Eve service on December 24, will begin with a Musical Prelude at 6:00 pm, and continue with the candlelight worship service at 6:30 pm.

**Lights and Locks:** We are in need of volunteers to “Open & Lock-Up” the church each month next year. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall if you are able to help open and lock-up for one month in 2025!



**Flower Calendar:** If you would like to remember loved ones or honor a special event, please sign the *2025 Flower Calendar*, which is located in the 24<sup>th</sup> Street hallway adjacent to the Fellowship Hall. The cost is fifty dollars (\$50) for two vases.

may review and select items for their children. Donations of wrapping papers, bags, and tissue paper will also be accepted to offer a wrapping station during the event.

**Donation Drop-off Schedule/Volunteer Opportunities:**

The following days and times will be available for individuals to drop off donations and assist with set-up and cleaning. Individuals, families, or community groups can sign up to volunteer along with our church members. Adults must accompany groups with children 10 and under that volunteer.

- Sunday, December 8th, 5:00 - 7:00 pm
- Tuesday, December 10th, 6:30 - 7:30 pm
- Wednesday, December 11th, 5:30 - 6:30 pm
- Friday, December 13th, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
- Saturday, December 14th, NORTH POLE GIVEAWAY to be held from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

**Toy Giving Guidelines:**

- All toys should be new or used toys that are unbroken, not rusted, and in good condition.
- Games and puzzles should be complete and have all pieces. Please place games/puzzles in Ziploc or grocery bag so that the pieces will not get lost.
- Dolls should have all parts. Place doll clothes and accessories in a plastic bag and secure them with the doll.
- Electronics should be in working condition. Batteries do not have to be included.
- Bicycles, tricycles, and riding toys should be in working condition.
- Sports equipment such as bowling or golfing sets should be boxed or placed in a sealed plastic bag.
- No guns, spears, or swords will be accepted.
- All books should be in new or good condition. No tears in pages/covers nor stains.
- Clothing and food will not be accepted.

Any questions, please contact: Janelle Yerty, 814-934-1209, [Janelle.yerty@gmail.com](mailto:Janelle.yerty@gmail.com)

 **DECEMBER**  
Birthdays & Anniversaries

Devyn Little	2
George Greiner III	4
Dick Bender	7
Jane Hite	7
Jeff Stanek	10
Amanda Stanek	11
Dave Adams	11
Dee Schnarrs	12
Willie Stephens	13
Rich Slutzker	14
Suzanne Slep	14
Kathy Rutter	16
Sandy Settle	22
Irelynn Treese	22
Sharon Judd	28
Zoe Yerty	28
Emilee Hollingsworth	29

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Dennis & Kathy Braun 18

**North Pole Toy Drive/Giveaway**

Providence Presbyterian Church is hosting a USED and NEW toy drive in preparation for a “North Pole Giveaway” to provide parents/caregivers an opportunity to select toys/books. To provide this giveaway, new and gently used toys/books will be accepted for children aged 6 months to 13 years old. See Toy Giving Guidelines below for items we will collect. Also, please note the Drop Off Schedule below to bring in your toys or volunteer.

Providence Presbyterian Church is looking to assist parents and caregivers in need. We are seeking to partner with the local community to collect and distribute toys to families during the holiday season. Used toys will be cleaned by church volunteers. Families attending the “North Pole Giveaway” event on Saturday, December 14th,





## Christmas Joy Offering

When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace and salvation to his people. This child, God's Word made flesh—fully human and fully God—became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all of our vulnerabilities, struggles and triumphs, Jesus became one of us—leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life.

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us—past, present and future—who have pointed us to God.

Jesus' example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

Special offering envelopes will be available at the church. If you are mailing your contribution, mark "Christmas Joy Offering" on the memo line of your check. If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.



## A Thank-You from the Finance & Stewardship Committee

On behalf of the Session Finance & Stewardship Committee, thanks for your participation in this year's stewardship emphasis, "Moving Forward by Faith." Your willingness to step out by faith with others here at Providence Presbyterian Church concerning your giving in the future is very much appreciated.

Your commitment—along with those of others who are "moving forward by faith"—is what enables us to continue to share the good news of the Gospel and to minister to people in Jesus' name. Your financial support, as well as your participation through the investment of your time and talents, is a vital part of all that we do for the Lord here at Providence.

Thank you for being part of this fellowship. Thank you for participating in this year's stewardship emphasis in response to the Lord's leading in your life. And thank you for being one who is "moving forward by faith." As we continue to serve the Lord together in this ministry, may God bless your life and all that you do for the sake of the Gospel in the days ahead.



Our congregation extends its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of **Lundyn A. Treese**, who passed away on Sunday, October 27, 2024. Lundyn is survived by her parents, Justin and Angela (Mollica) Treese, and her two sisters, Irelynn and Holynn.