



# The Good News Letter

## Pleasantville Presbyterian Church

SEEKING • CONNECTING • SERVING

### A Look at Advent and Christmas Seasons



**Christmas Pageant**  
*(above)*

**Special Christmas Music**  
*(right)*

**Posada Party**  
*(below right)*

**Bryan's Children's Sermon**  
*(below left)*



### Come Hear about Mark Zarick's Service Trip to India



Please join Mark Zarick in the Campbell Room at 11:30 am after worship on January 10th. Mark will be talking about his IBM corporate service trip to Varanasi, India this fall. He spent 4 weeks there helping a non-government organization dedicated to supporting poor women and children. Then Gail joined him for a week of touring the "Golden Triangle". Mark will discuss his work and vacation with a slide show of pictures that he took.

### Preserve Our Property

We are happy to report that the architect's survey (75 pages!) is now complete and ready to be reviewed by the POP Committee. We will be looking at all the recommendations to determine how best to proceed with our property campaign in the New Year. Stay tuned!

## Pastor Debbie Suddenly Figures it Out!

Dear Friends in Christ,  
I had an epiphany, as they say. I suddenly figured out what it was all about – what was really going on under the surface. And once I had an epiphany, nothing was ever quite the same.

Epiphany in the way we celebrate it in the church happened in the book of Matthew, when the wise men saw a star, and believed it meant that something important was about to be revealed to them. And then they saw the baby – and even more was revealed – as they realized not to trust Herod with the good news of the baby born to be the Son of God.

Sometimes it is music that helps us to have an epiphany – to catch us up short, and take our breath away, and help us finally see what we've been wanting to see all along.

Like the camp song that reminds us "This little light of mine – I'm gonna let it shine." Which means we don't have to be afraid to be God's children, to share the truth

of what is saving our life now, to let our lives speak the good news that Christ was/is born into our world.

Or "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Which reminds us that God's word is here for us. It can shape us and show us the way – we don't have to walk alone and unguided.

Or "Hark! The herald angels sing, 'Glory to the newborn King. Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!'" Good news that reaches beyond the words we know so well to speak about reconciliation and peace and mercy that is real and present in Christ, born in Bethlehem.

Putting the pieces together, paying attention to the stars and the music and anything else that points us toward Jesus – that's the joy of Epiphany!

In Christ's Love,

*Pastor Debbie*

## Photo Directory Update!

The new church photo directory is coming in January! Which means if you want to be a part of it you must **ACT NOW!** We will only accept photos until **January 10**.

There are two ways to get into the directory:

- Email [bryan@pvillepresby.org](mailto:bryan@pvillepresby.org) a photo of yourself or your family **OR**
- be there on January 10 after worship to have a photo taken

## Interested in Learning More About Church Membership?

If you are interested in church membership or just have questions, Pastor Debbie is available to meet with you. We are also organizing an informal gathering in February for folks to learn more and ask questions. For more information, talk with Pastor Debbie or Barb Loizeaux.

## Transition Group

Our next gathering will be on January 22nd at 7:30pm.

This group shares our experiences of transition – something we all navigate through - and provide support, encouragement, and inspiration to each other. All are welcome!

## Food Pantry Reminder

Don't forget to bring in non-perishable food items for the Pleasantville Food Pantry. There are 2 places to leave your donations....one in the sanctuary and one in the downstairs foyer. This is a great way to share your resources with those who need help throughout the year.

## New Year's Resolutions

*From nymensministry.com*

**Know / Love  
God**

Mark 12:29-31

- God First in Everything
- Daily Quiet Time
- Daily Bible Reading
- Pray Throughout Day
- Journal: Value God's Word
- Love My Neighbor

**"Seek to know God" & "Who needs me Today?"**



# Church News

## Ring in the New Year!

It is almost time to ring in the New Year and here is your chance to “ring” in the new year with the Bell Choir. Rehearsals will be on Tuesdays from 7:30 – 9pm starting in January. The bell choir is open to anyone high school age or older who can read basic music and likes to have fun! If you decide to join the choir, it can be a short commitment. We rehearse for several weeks then play during worship. If you are interested in joining us or want more information, contact Cathy Fellows.



## Pre-School Registration Has Begun!

Great Beginnings, our church’s weekday pre-school, is currently registering 2½, 3, and 4 year olds for the September 2016 class. Spread the word. Not only is this an excellent program for the little ones, it is also a great way to introduce families to our church. (church families receive a tuition discount). Brochures and registration forms are available on the blue bookshelf in the CE wing or for more information call Ruth Fischer at 769-0826 or check out our website:

[www.great-beginnings.org](http://www.great-beginnings.org)



## Newsletter Ideas?

Do you have some ideas on how to enhance our monthly newsletter? Feedback...suggestions?? If so, please let Barb Loizeaux know or email [newsletter@pvillepresby.org](mailto:newsletter@pvillepresby.org).

## Remember Your Growth Through Faith Pledge

*It's Not Too Late*

Please remember to return your 2016 Stewardship pledge card. We have cards available in the rear of the sanctuary or in the church office. It’s easy to make your weekly, monthly or annual commitment electronically on our web site at [www.pvillepresby.org](http://www.pvillepresby.org). Or if you prefer, speak with Jo Anna in the church office. Also, please contact Jo Anna if you wish to receive weekly giving envelopes instead. Thank you for your prayerful support in 2016.



## The First Envelope: Per Capita

Per capita is a set amount of money per member that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) which makes it possible for us to govern ourselves. The first-known mention of per capita dates back to 1734 in a letter to ministers!

Per capita funding is how Presbyterians mutually share the costs of coming together to discern the Spirit’s leading for the future. It is how we are trained to become better elders and ministers. It is how we participate in the life of the wider church by serving on General Assembly committees and commissions.

Members may elect to fund their own per capita contribution in addition to their weekly offering. This year’s Per Capita is \$31 per member.

# Church News

## Christmas Celebrations

The Christmas spirit filled the air on December 6th as we experienced the story of Christ's birth in a multitude of ways.

The story of the Nativity came to life right before our eyes in worship. Voices young and old helped to relate the story of Jesus' birth, through song AND scripture.



Then, during coffee hour, we continued to think about what Christmas means as we decorated ornaments, stars and more during the Christmas Craft fair.

This delightful event only happens because over a dozen people dedicate their time during this very hectic season to make it wonderful. A big thank you goes out to Kathy and Bill, Kat and Greg, Sarah, Heather, Michael, Karen, Michelle, Suzanna, Alicia, Barb, Christine, Cathy and the Bell Choir, all our cast and crew, and many, many more.

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## Women's Brunch

We had a very successful women's brunch. About 30 ladies came to enjoy great food and wonderful conversation. We thank Pastor Debbie Bronkema for her always inspiring talk. We were all motivated and eager to look for those moments of happiness and balance in our lives.

We are already excited and thinking about the next one by spring. More detail to follow.



## Children's Sunday

February 7th

Our Sunday School classes will be sharing their own unique ways of worship with the congregation on Sunday, February 7th.

We hope to see you in worship to be a part of this special service. If you would like to be involved in planning, teaching, or leading part of this fun and inventive worship service, talk to Bryan Bardin or Kathy Brown.

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## Parents Night Out

On December 13th, nearly 40 people came together for an evening of fun and games as part of the youth group's "Parents Night Out" fundraiser. It was an opportunity for parent's to have a much-needed evening to catch up while giving their kids a chance to be part of the youth group for a night.

Our high schoolers lead crafts, games, a scavenger hunt, and more. Our middle schoolers helped ensure everyone felt right at home and included. And our Youth Council even pitched in here and there.

This event helps support the ongoing missions of the youth group, including Christmas in Appalachia, college care packages and more.

A big thank you goes to our adult support, namely JoAnne, Rich, Jeannine, Linda, Marleni, and Vicky.

## **Pleasantville Presbyterian Church**

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# **An Open Letter from Clergy and Religious Leadership of Pleasantville, New York**

*December 11, 2015*

At this holiday season of light, hope and peace, we express our gratitude for living in these United States of America. Ours is a nation built on concepts and principles that guarantee our right to freedom of worship, whatever our religion. The protection of our diversity, pluralism, and equality under the law are not only core values, they are founding ideals that make our nation great.

While there have been times in our nation's history when we failed to uphold these ideals, we must learn from our history. We must remain vigilant, striving to indeed be one nation and to seek justice for all.

It is for this reason we find the current backlash against Muslim citizens of our nation so deeply troubling, both as Americans and as people of faith. The sacred Scriptures of all our religions affirm the golden rule; "Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you," as well as the injunctions to welcome the stranger and to love our neighbors.

There is no place for hatred or exclusion based on race, religion, or national origin in our local or national community.

In the coming year, The Pleasantville Clergy Association invites you to join us as we embark on community programming in an effort to learn about one another's religions and get to know one another as neighbors. We encourage all members of our community to support our neighbors of all faiths and to speak out against any expressions of prejudice and bigotry, whether public or private.

We invite and encourage you to not be influenced by rhetoric of fear, and to reach out with hospitality to those whose cultures and religions are different from your own.

May peace be with you,

### **The Pleasantville Clergy Association**

Rev. Dr. Debra J. K. Bronkema, *Pastor, Pleasantville Presbyterian Church*

Father Hugh Burns, *OP, Holy Innocents Parish*

Rabbi Dr. Julie Hilton Danan, *Pleasantville Community Synagogue*

The Rev. Paul Egensteiner, *Pastor, Emanuel Lutheran Church*

The Rev. Mary B. Gregorius, *Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church*

Mahjabeen Hassan, MD, *Chairperson American Muslim Women's Association*

Rev. Colleen Holby

Rev. Suhee Kim, *Pastor, The United Methodist Church of Pleasantville*

The Rev. Arlin Roy, LCSW, *Foundation for Religion and Mental Health*