



INTERPRETATION

Sewickley Presbyterian Church Newsletter
January/February 2020

**FOR TO THIS END WE TOIL & STRIVE
BECAUSE WE HAVE OUR**

Hope **SET ON THE**
Living God,

**who is the SAVIOR of all people,
especially of those who** *believe.*

| Timothy 4:10

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NEWSLETTER

The SPC newsletter, **Interpretation**, is published six times a year. Please make submissions to, or if you have any questions contact, Jennifer Johnson at jjohnson@sewickleypresby.org.

VISITATION

If you or a member of your family are in the hospital and would like a visit, please call the church office to let us know.

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Our Only Hope

By Rev. Kevin J. Long



"Help me, Obi Wan Kenobi! You're my only hope." Those iconic words spoken by Princess Leia have been etched into the brains of many of us who grew up in the 1970s. I still remember as a six-year old kid seeing the lines coming out of the movie theaters to see Star Wars. It was revolutionary, shaping the imaginations of an entire generation and changing the movie industry forever. I have many mixed feelings about the arrival of the final installment of the third trilogy which brings an end to a story that was such a huge part of my childhood.

There are so many memorable lines and scenes from the various Star Wars films. But Leia's desperate words to Obi Wan have always stuck with me: "You're my only hope." We often feel that way, don't we, that our lives are utterly depending on someone or something to save us, whether it be a new job or a raise or a new relationship or a baby or a medical miracle. I'm sure many people are counting on this new year to magically wipe away our past and give us a whole new life. We put so much hope in things that, while they might help us or make us feel better for a while, they cannot ultimately save us. That's because everyone and everything in this world is also in need of saving, and none of it will last.

Fortunately, we have just celebrated at Christmas the arrival of the one true hope of the world, the only one

who can save us all: Emmanuel, the God who is with us. The Apostle Paul reminds us of Isaiah's prophetic words about Jesus, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope" (Rom 15:12). Indeed, he is our only hope.

We hope in Jesus because, by the miracle of the Incarnation, he is one of us, and he knows what we are going through. He lived a life of perfect obedience to God on our behalf, even to the point of dying for our sins on the cross. We hope in Jesus because he is also "the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe" (1 Tim 4:10). As the Word of God through whom all things came into being, it is he alone who has the power to give us the abundant life and to make all things new. And he invites us to become a part of his story, a story that because of his resurrection will never come to an end.

As we enter not just a new year but a new decade, remember that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, and he will be with you to face whatever comes your way. And that is always a reason for hope. So perhaps in this new year, our new daily prayer ought to be: "Help me, Jesus Christ! You're my only hope."

-- Kevin

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

February 16	Founders' Day
February 25	Mardi Gras Pancake Supper
February 26	Ash Wednesday Worship
March 4	Lenten Soup Suppers & Studies begin
March 7-8	Campbell Weekend
March 22	Marianne Cornetti in Concert
April 19	Afro Blue in Worship & in Concert
May 17	Word Sung



DOLLAR & SENSE

By Laura Mikush, Business Administrator

Did you know blinds have been installed in the Campbell Room? With the Campbell Room now being our main meeting space on the first floor, we needed to improve the space by controlling the amount of sunlight that shines in through the windows. The cost of the blinds totaled \$1,648.80.

CARYN DOEGE UPDATE

Church member, Caryn Doege, recently completed the fall semester of her second year of studies in the Master of Divinity program at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. In her middler year, she is serving as a student pastor at Waverly Presbyterian Church, located in Regent Square.



In this internship position, Caryn co-leads worship each Sunday, and is gaining experience in providing pastoral care, participating in committee meetings, and working with youth in community outreach projects.

Following the spring semester, Caryn will travel to the Netherlands with a group from the seminary to learn how Dutch churches are revitalizing existing congregations and planting new ones. Caryn is currently under care of our Session as she goes through the PC(USA) ordination process.

CAMPBELL WEEKEND

March 7-8, 2020

Guest Speaker Anne Zaki – Professor of Preaching Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt



INTERFAITH PROGRAM

Please join us Sunday afternoon, January 26, from 3-5 PM for an interfaith gathering in the dining room. *Welcoming Everyone*, a community group with which our church partners, will present a panel discussion among representatives of various religious faiths. These will include Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The program will begin with an exploration of music from various faith traditions. Following the program, there will be small table discussions and a light meal.



By Jenny Hay, Director of FriendShip Preschool

Registration for the 2020-2021 FriendShip Preschool fall classes will start after we welcome in the New Year. The early registration deadline for interested church members and FriendShip families is January 17. Registration for new families will begin January 22. FriendShip offers seven weekly classes for children ages 24 months - 5 years of age. Every Friday morning (9-11:30 AM) we also offer a Drop Off Program for children 24 months - 5 years of age. This program is open to current FriendShip children and also those in the community.

Our mission at FriendShip is to provide our community with a high quality, Christian-based, early childhood program that promotes social, emotional, cognitive and physical development in young children. We recognize that each child is a unique and special individual. The FriendShip Preschool is a happy preschool that uses play as the primary means to develop skills and growth, while fostering discovery, friendships and enjoyment in the preschool experience.

Please contact Jenny Hay for more information or to schedule a visit. We would love to show you our classrooms!

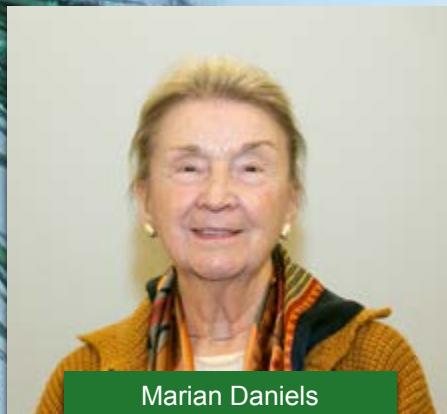


WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

If you see the individuals below make sure to welcome them to our church family or drop them a note! They all joined SPC in November.



Haris Hodzic



Marian Daniels



Gere & Linda Grimm



Alison Eonta & Doug Sechler



Kristin Olson



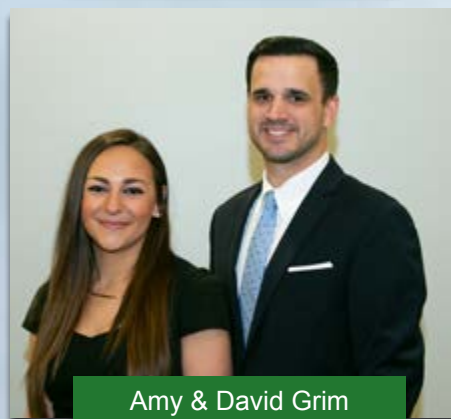
Mike Creamer



Bebe & John English



Terry Smith



Amy & David Grim



Michelle LaBuda



Brendon Walker



Linda Fleming

SPC MEMBERSHIP

New Member Orientation: March 1, 8 & 15

Are you interested in learning more about our church? Have you thought about joining our church family? The only requirement is a profession of faith in Christ Jesus and a commitment to active participation in the ministry of SPC.

The orientation goals are to increase awareness and understanding of:

- the central beliefs of the Christian faith
- the Presbyterian Church (USA)
- Sewickley Presbyterian Church

The orientation schedule is as follows:

- Dinner with Rev. Kevin and Rebecca Long
- New Member Class
- Meet with our church Elders
- You will be welcomed as a part of our church family during worship.

Please contact Sharon Barber in our church office with any questions and to register for the next orientation.

sbarber@sewickleypresby.org

NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY

Thank you so much to everyone who took part in our new church directory. If you had your photo taken by Lifetouch, your free 8x10 photo is in the church office. Please stop by the office at your convenience to pick yours up. They are located behind the reception desk, on the counter.

If you submitted a photo and have yet to pay the \$10 fee, please forward your payment to Laura Mikush. Thank you!

Save the Date

JANUARY 26

9 AM Worship

Commissioning for DR Mission Trip

Sunday School for Children & Youth: 10 AM

10 AM Annual Meeting

11 AM Worship

Ordination/Installation of Church Officers

An Opportunity to Grow

BETTER THAN AVERAGE TRAINING

Thursday, January 16 | 4 - 8:30 PM

The Pittsburgh Presbytery will be hosting a training event AT OUR CHURCH for all those who volunteer with our Children & Youth Ministries, for those who might want to become involved in the future, or anyone who cares about the future church. This event will be free for all attendees, and will include dinner.

This event is designed so that people can come and go as their schedules permit, as we know everyone has different work/school schedules. There will be main sessions, workshops, and breakout sessions on intergenerational learning, choosing and using curriculum, dealing with challenging behaviors, being service-minded, and much more. The goal of this training is to equip all of our volunteers for the ministries in which they participate.

Please sign up on the church website or email Mike Creamer directly to register at:

mcreamer@sewickleypresby.org



By Sara Hoagland
Interim Director of Children's Ministries

*"Often when you think you're at the end of something,
you're at the beginning of something else."*

-Fred Rogers



We have many reasons to praise God for this past year with Children's Ministries, but perhaps even more opportunities to celebrate in the days ahead!

The Advent season was pure joy for our Children's programs. Both Sunday School classes and Club 345 participated in the Deacon Food Basket Drive. Our Sunday School classes practiced being Good Samaritans by collecting for our Deacon Food Baskets in each of our three classrooms, and Club 345 helped with the counting and sorting!

Club 345 held an incredible collection for Operation Christmas Child filling over 20 shoe boxes with lovely clothing items, toys, school supplies, and toiletries for children all around the world who are in need. We also hosted friends from Masonic Village for an afternoon of music, friendship, fellowship, and of course hot cocoa! Our kids practiced two special songs with Jeremy Fisher to sing to our guests, along with a homemade Christmas ornament, and card. It was a memorable treat for all!



We concluded the year with our Christmas Pageant, directed by Andrew Birnie, Erin Leghorn, and Carrie Beynon. It was an incredible journey working with over 40 kids to put together something special for the congregation. We are so thankful for the hard work and helping hands that went into allowing our youngest stars to shine!

As we look ahead into the bright New Year at SPC, these incredible young "stars" truly are our "beginning of something."

Upcoming Events

January 15

Club 345 Resumes

January 19 | 12-3 PM

Family Movie at the Faith House

- Beat those winter blues with an afternoon movie with friends!

February 7 | 6-8:30 PM

Parents' Night Out at the Faith House

- It's a Pajama Party! Wear your favorite PJs, bring your sleeping bag and slippers! We will enjoy donuts and milk, play a Valentine's Game, and snuggle in for a movie! Register on our website by February 1.

February 25 | 6:30 PM

Mardi Gras party in the Dining Room!





SAVE THE DATES

YOUTH SUNDAY

February 9
9 AM Worship Service
11 AM Worship Service

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TRIP

July 11-18
Cost: \$1000
Current 9th-12th Graders

SURF CITY

August 2-7
Cost: \$520
Current 6th-8th graders



February 16

For the last two years we have been a part of the Presbytery-wide "Event," a giant youth group gathering for all of the Presbyterian Churches throughout the Pittsburgh area. We are looking forward to joining them again this year. We will be going this February in place of our normal Youth Group meeting time.

Location: Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church

Laurelville Weekends

To some people, spending a weekend in the cold and mud sounds like a punishment. But the muddy weekends at Laurelville have been one of our favorites times together as a group. From mud football and dance parties to Bible studies and conversations around the fire, camp is always a special time of year to get away from the busyness of everyday and connect with God and friends in a new and rejuvenating way. One of the things our kids loved most this year was going through the prayer labyrinth that they have at Laurelville. Tapping into an ancient spiritual discipline was a really cool way for our students to grow in their faith in a new (but old) way! We can't wait until next year!

Stocking Project

One of the projects we have been a part of for the last few years at the Center for Hope is filling stockings for children around Christmas. This year we filled 117 Christmas stockings with all kinds of things for CFH families and then handed them out at the Center's Christmas party. There is something so rewarding about seeing the look on people's faces when they receive a gift they weren't expecting. There's something just as rewarding for me as I watch our students work throughout the fall to make this project come to fruition and take ownership of it along the way.



Open Hands Service Day

This December we had the opportunity to serve again with our friends at Open Hands Ministries. We worked on a new house they have been renovating in the neighborhood of Garfield. It was a cold morning with lots of digging, deck building, and roofing, but it was also a lot of fun to trade stories with other people that came to work alongside us that day. We always know we will get a full day's work in when we are at Open Hands, but we also are grateful to be a part of what they are doing to change the narrative around what it means to be a neighbor today in their community. It's great to see our kids serve together and show the love of Jesus to others.

Youth Christmas Party

Every Christmas we end our year together with a big party -- and this year was a blast! There is something special about getting together with everyone in the midst of school wrapping up, preparing for traveling, and looking ahead to Christmas. Taking a moment to laugh and catch up and eat way too many pizza bites is just good for the soul. We are looking forward to getting back together in the new year!

By Mike Creamer, Director of Youth Ministries



2019 Deacon Christmas Food Basket Project

By Eric Fulmer, Deacon

Saturday, December 14 was an overcast, soggy, bone-chilling day. Given this circumstance, most people would react by adding an extra log on the fireplace and snuggling up with a good book. But this was not the case for 54 SPC volunteers who chose instead to rise early and devote their time and energy to the delivery of baskets of food to our neighbors in need.

Collectively, these volunteers delivered food baskets to 77 households (representing a total of 297 household members) in Glenfield, Sewickley, Leetsdale, Baden, Ambridge and Fair Oaks. Due to the abundance of food donated and a slightly lower than usual number of referrals from social service organizations, each recipient household received an extraordinary amount of food this year.

BY THE NUMBERS

In the final analysis, members and friends of SPC donated 125 units of ketchup, 82 containers of mayonnaise, 119 bottles of mustard, 226 cans of beans, 236 tins of tuna and chicken, 206 cans of soup, 122 boxes of cereal, 111 cans of coffee, 91 boxes of tea, 97 containers of cocoa, 91 boxes of oatmeal, 170 boxes of pasta, 123 jars of spaghetti sauce, 141 jars of peanut butter, 107 jars of jelly, 97 packages of dried fruit and raisins and 91 containers of nuts! There was also \$5965.00 donated to help with purchasing fresh food to accompany the other items.

The Board of Deacons extends its sincere thanks to all of the referring organizations, food donors, financial contributors, Turkey Trot participants, packing volunteers, delivery volunteers, Laura Mikush and others who generously contributed to the successful implementation of this project.



Produce to People

January 18

Join us as we spend a Saturday morning serving other in Pittsburgh! We'll meet at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Pittsburgh, and help to pack fresh fruit and veggies, and other food, into individual and family sized portions. We then distribute it to those in need who come to the school to pick up the food. This is a great way to spend a few hours a year helping those in need.

Please visit our website to sign-up!

Center for Hope Auction

Over 200 people attended the CFH auction in December! The Silent Auction brought in over \$40,000 which will go towards helping to stock the Center's food pantry and to provide supplemental food for Highland Elementary School children.

Thank you to all of those who supplied gift baskets for the auction and for those who attended to auction to help support the Center.



A Week with Dr Yasquina

By Barb Swan, SPC Member

Dr. David Swan traveled to the Dominican Republic from October 28 to November 1 to shadow our newest mission partner, Dr. Yasquina Benjamin, who was born and raised in Marguarita, a small batey (village) in the sugarcane fields in the Dominican Republic. She was able to attend medical school in DR. After graduation, she moved back to Marguarita to serve those who live and work in the sugarcane fields. Most of these people are ethnic Haitians who have lived in the DR for generations but have no official standing or rights in that country.

David spent three days with Yasquina as she went about her typical workday. She sees about 25 patients a week in the clinic attached to her home in Marguarita. She has an ultrasound machine in the clinic and performs about 50 ultrasounds a month. She provides prenatal care, pediatric care, and primary care for people with diabetes and high blood pressure. She also sutures lacerations and does some minor office surgery. For patients who need more care or surgery, she facilitates referral to nearby medical facilities, and helps with transportation.

David was able to go with Yasquina on two of her outreach visits. The first was to a school in a remote village, reachable only with four-wheel drive. She taught 38 students the basics of dental hygiene, using a large dental model. After instruction, she had each student demonstrate on the model. At the end, each student received a toothbrush and toothpaste. David can attest to the need for such instruction as he worked with dentists last year who were pulling decayed teeth from children as young as thirteen.

The second visit to a different village was a session with about twenty women to discuss women's health issues. An important topic was managing menstrual cycles. These women do not have access to tampons and sanitary napkins used by women in the U.S., nor do they have safe ways of disposing of these items once they are used. Dr. Yasquina taught them about reusable cloth pads and reusable menstrual cups. At the end, each woman was given her own menstrual cup.



Our mission budget includes \$10,800 to support Dr. Benjamin in her work. Half of this amount is part of her income to help support her and her family – her schoolteacher husband and three children. The other half supports her medical mission. Out of this money she buys medication for her patients and the items she distributes at her outreach visits, such as the toothbrushes, toothpaste, and menstrual cups. During his visit, David learned that Yasquina is well respected for her ministry and hard work. We can be confident that our mission dollars are helping to provide much needed medical care and basic healthcare education to people in need. It is a blessing to be able to work with Dr. Benjamin in this way.

A God Moment

By Nancy Merrill, SPC Member

In mid-December, our Knitting for Mission group decided to donate some of its hand-knit items that didn't sell at the mission fair to the Center for Hope. Stephanie O'Kane, a member of the group, delivered the items to the Center and reported the following to her fellow knitters. When I got to the Center, there was a lady in front of me at the desk talking with the volunteer and Sue Otto, director of the Center. I heard them telling her to try "toys for tots" but I was not really paying attention to the conversation. When Sue finished, I introduced myself and told her I was with our group and we wanted to see if she could use some hats and scarves. She asked, "They are new? They are hand-knit? And you don't care what I do with them?" I told her yes, and she could do with them as she saw fit. Sue said, "We are having a God moment."

She returned to the lady who had been in front of me and asked, "Could you use brand new, hand-knit hats and scarves for your grandchildren?" The woman very happily looked through our items and chose for each of her grandchildren. Sue explained to me, "This woman came to see if we had anything she could give to her grandchildren for Christmas. I didn't think we could help her until you walked through the door two minutes later with these lovely hats and scarves. This is what I call a God moment."



Sewickley Presbyterian Church

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414 Grant Street | Sewickley, PA | 15143

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Dated Material

PLEASE EXPEDITE

This newsletter is published by
Sewickley Presbyterian Church

Adult Education In January

ANSBY HALL

Explore what it means to worship! Through guest speakers, video curriculum, music, and discussion, we will consider what we do when we worship and why.

CONNECTIONS

Connections will shift in its *iFamily* series toward the blessings and complexity of family. Using scripture, videos, conversation, and guest speakers we will learn how our faith impacts our relationships.

JOHN WITH JOAN

John with Joan is all about studying the Bible by going through the book of John. If you would like to delve into the Word, plan on joining this class led by SPC member Joan Murdoch.