



What's Happening at Bluffton Presbyterian Church

January 2014

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, January 5 – Communion

3 Cents a Meal Offering

Special Music

Lay Reader: Carole Enneking

Greeters: Hursh Family

Acolytes: Patrick Rhonemus and Jacob Szabo

Sunday, January 12

Food Pantry

Choir

Lay Reader: Linda Sycks

Greeters: McCracken Family

Acolytes: Libby and Morgan McVetta

Sunday, January 19

Praise Team

Lay Reader: Lori Schmidt

Greeters: Dick and Jayne McGarrity

Acolytes: Paige McVetta and Avery Talavinia

Sunday, January 26

Susan Meier – Guest Pastor

Choir

Lay Reader: Darlene Hey

Greeters: John and Gayle Marshall

Acolytes: Will and Tucker Neff

Sunday, February 2 – Communion

3 Cents a Meal Offering

Lay Reader: Clair Winebar

Greeters: Clair and Diane Winebar

Acolytes: Sarah Gillen and Megan Sycks

Mark Your Calendars!

- January 5 – Take down church decorations – Following Worship
- January 5 – Youth Group – 5:00 to 7:00 PM
- January 12 – Pastor Matthew's Last Sunday & Reception for Zuehlke Family – Following Worship
- January 12 – Ordination & Installation Worship for New Deacons & Elders
- January 13 – Session Meeting – 7:00 PM
- January 15 – Praise Team Practice – 7:30 PM
- January 15 – Deacon's Meeting – 7:30 PM
- January 16 – Pastor Matthew's last office day
- January 26 - Annual Congregation Meeting/ Corporation Meeting – Following Worship
- January 26 – Newsletter Deadline – CEGillen@MarathonPetroleum.com
- February 2 – Souper Bowl of Caring – Soup Luncheon – Following Worship
- February 6 – Daily Bread Soup Kitchen – 9:40 AM – Church Parking Lot



Announcement Procedure

If you have an announcement to present in church during the month of January, get it to the church office by Wednesday morning so it will be announced by our Worship Leader for the month.

January Worship Leader – Dick McGarrity

Small Groups

Tuesday – Church Library at 6:30 PM

Pastor's Letter

Most holidays are pure celebration. Think Fourth of July commemorating the Declaration of Independence, or Thanksgiving reminding us of the need to be thankful. Even little observed holidays, such as President's Day is a celebration. The odd one out is January 1. New Years is a bit of an odd holiday. On one hand it's a beginning, yet at the same time it's an ending. It is a transition. It is bittersweet after a fashion – as we hear in the lyrics of the iconic “*Auld Lang Syne*.” The only other day that has this relationship are our birthdays – at once celebrating a year older, but also acknowledging that we can never be our younger selves ever again.

Faced with such a transition, it's easy to experience the full gambit of emotions. We can feel excited, hopeful, and optimistic for the possibilities of the future. And yet also feel depressed, frustrated, and lonely for what we are leaving behind. This dichotomy can leave us with an odd feeling as if we are emotionally being pulled in two directions, unsure which way to go. This is normal. For it truly it is a transition – a passing from one time to another.

Thinking about this change in years and that weird feeling reminds me of something the Apostle Paul writes towards the end of his letter to the Philippians:

“Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.” (Philippians 3:12-16)

As Paul writes this, he is in prison, under trial for his faith. Prison is a place, much like

December 31, one could spend many hours focusing on what could have or should have been. It's a sweet lure to dwell on the past; pining for lost possibilities. Yet, rather than spiral down those dark thoughts, Paul shares with his friends to stay the course. Don't go there. And, interestingly enough he writes to not get bogged down in either the good or the bad of yesterday, “forgetting what lies behind”. Instead, Paul urges the church to “strain forward to what lies ahead...the prize of the call of God.”

Just as it's easy to become wrapped up in conflicting emotions at the turn of the year, so too it can happen as we move closer to life transition, such as graduation, marriage, or having a baby. In all of these transitions, while the general feeling is good there is also much that is lost as well (largely the innocence of youth in each case!). Paul's wisdom still shines through in these cases: keep at the work and focus on the prize. You will graduate school – now it's time to work. You will be married – now it's time to be a spouse. You will have a child – now is a time to become a parent.

Our little church family is also looking towards a life transition as I conclude my ministry with you. Yet, just as the case with all the other forms of transition, while the emotions are likely mixed (my emotions are very much mixed), the call remains firm: keep at the work and focus on the prize. For me, I continue my work to help heal and lead congregations to a greater and more joy-filled relationship with God in Christ. For Bluffton Presbyterian, that call is continue to strive to be the best congregation for its people and the community. I do believe that we have learned much from each other. Yet, neither of our goals have changed. There is still much work to be done. So, while it may feel bittersweet, let us keep our focus on the prize that God has called us.

Let us remember that, as Paul shares, Christ has called us to be his own and in Christ, we are never truly separated. For we are the One Church, together wherever our service takes us. So, push on! Push on to that place, that goal, that prize which God has before you.

I would like to ask everyone to make an effort to join us for worship on January 12 so that my family and I have a chance to say good-bye. It would be a nice send off to have all of our friends in attendance.

Thank you for the memories & friendship.
~ God be with you 'til we meet again,
Rev. Dr. Matthew Zuehlke

*PS: our new address will be:
2130 S. 12th Street
Apartment 338
Bismarck, ND 58504*

Highlights of December Session Meetings

- Pastor Matthew stated that he was submitting his resignation so that he could accept a position at First Presbyterian Church in Bismarck, North Dakota. Motion made and approved to accept Matthew's resignation. Pastor Matthew's last Sunday will be January 12; last day in the office will be Wednesday, January 15, and last pay January 15. Pension will be covered through January 31. Clerk was asked to write letter to Matthew's new church to see if they are willing to split the month of January's pension with us. Pastor Matthew is working with moving companies, but expects to vacate the manse around January 15.
- Susan Meier, Presbyter for Common Life – MVP, explained Session's options for Transitional Leadership – Bridge leadership or Interim. Motion made and approved that BPC secure full-time Bridge leadership starting February 1. Bridge leadership would allow continuation of full-time pastor immediately, but allows Session time to examine future options.
- Following were elected at the Congregational Meeting: Elders – Lori Schmidt, Jeanette Warren, Cindy Gillen, Tom Hursey, and Dave Kisor. Deacons – Kay Ziessler, Tom Edwards, and Diane Winebar. Nominating Committee – Betsey Angus, Jodi Brauen, Mike Rhonemus, and Dave Sycks.
- Building Restoration Project would involve these areas – chimney (remove old chimney, reconstruct roofline to match existing structure, and re-shingle and flash affected area), sanctuary roof (replace rotten soffit, replace missing or damaged flashing, fix/replace damaged shingles), CE roof (remove and replace rubber membrane roof), sanctuary doors (remove and replace three exterior doors and repair trim work), masonry (tuck point necessary areas, replace damaged/missing bricks, seal), stained glass windows (remove protective covers, repaint woodwork, replace protective covers and seal with caulking), and sanctuary interior (replace damaged plaster and lath under stained glass windows, front entrances, and choir area, skim coat ceiling in damaged and discolored areas).
- Session expects the cost to be approximately \$110,000. Session has approved \$30,000 to come from church resources (savings, memorial, and building fund) with the remaining amount to come from donations. Session approved to run a two-year fund drive to be handled by our own Stewardship/Finance committee. If approval is given to proceed we would need to borrow money from church funds because the contractors would need to be paid prior to the end of the two-year fund drive. Any money borrowed from ourselves would need to be paid back.
- Members had opportunities to ask questions. Comments expressed included – using local contractors, securing multiple bids, and support for doing the necessary maintenance work on our 150 year old building. Motion made and approved to proceed with the Building Restoration Project as described for up to \$110,000 with \$30,000 coming from church resources (savings, memorial, building fund) and the remainder to be raised through donations and two-year fund drive. If bids would be higher than \$110,000 then congregational approval would be needed to proceed.
- Pledge cards are available and donations are being accepted for the Building Restoration Project.

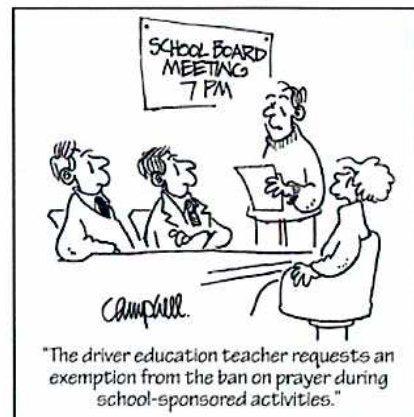
- Session would like to schedule construction for late spring/summer. Discussed that a small group needs to be assigned to follow through with securing multiple bids (including one from Global) in a timely fashion. With Pastor Matthew leaving, one person from this group needs to be the contact person for the Building Restoration Project.

- Deacon Moderator Shirley Kisor reviewed the Deacon activities for the year – CARE ministry which allowed Deacons to maintain personal contact with church members, set up/assist with Communion monthly, accompany Pastor to assist with home Communion to home-bound members quarterly, sending cards/We Care posters, delivering worship service CDs to home-bound members requesting them, fellowship time quarterly, assisting with transportation of members to appointments, organizing/providing home meals for members (5 members – new mothers, members home from hospitalizations), offering assistance during inclement weather, funeral dinners (families of John Warren and Myrna Engelhardt), spring bake sale, preparing/serving two Community Meals, education/training for being a Deacon, updating birthday/anniversary list, purchased new roaster for kitchen, purchased annual subscriptions for Presbyterian Today, and contributed to Youth mission project for Bluffton Community Day Care. Deacons plan to improve service to the congregation by continuing to grow in CARE Ministry. Deacons express appreciation for encouragement and training provided by Pastor Matthew. Session is most appreciative of the numerous roles our Deacons serve our church family.

- Approved budget changes where line items had exceeded their budget – Postage – additional \$105, Office supplies – additional \$100, and Building maintenance – additional \$50.
- Approved placing the Membership Directory in small binders, have black/white line art cover, colored photo pages with the expense to come from Office Supply line. Approved

having Ohio Northern University's auditing class conduct the 2013 financial review. Approved receiving Geraldine Sullivan-Clark as a member by Profession of Faith. Pastor Matthew has met with her. Elders/Deacons will be ordained/installed on January 12. Approved to accept Kay Ziessler's letter of resignation as Elder (so she can become a Deacon). Insurance was renewed in the fall. Approved to not object to request of liquor permit by El Canon LTD.

- Approved calling Annual Congregation Meeting/Corporation Meeting for Sunday, January 26, following the morning worship service. Susan Meier will be preaching that day and will moderate the meeting.
- Session interviewed three candidates for the Bridge Pastor position.
- Approved increasing the Treasurer's pay by 25% to \$4,906 for 2014. Treasurer's job has increased in complexity and in searching for a new treasurer it was realized that a more competitive salary was necessary.
- Approved hiring Cathy Carroll as Treasurer as of January 2014 (exact date in January is yet to be determined). Session thanks Cathy for volunteering for this role until a replacement can be found.
- Bluffton Presbyterian Church has received \$7,000 bequest. Approved honoring the donor's request that the money be used to replace two ovens and range top in the basement kitchen, purchase 60 pew Bibles (New Revised Standard Version), and 140 Presbyterian hymnals (2013 edition).



Celebration of Ministry and Friendship



Following the worship service on Sunday, January 12, we will have a special fellowship time allowing you time to share memories, thankfulness of their ministry with us, and best wishes. Please make special plans to join us on this Sunday as we say good-bye to Pastor Matthew and the Zuehlke family.

In celebration of the ministry and friendship of the Zuehlke family, anyone who would like to contribute to a best wishes gift from the church to Matthew and Michelle may do so by placing designated cash or a check in the offering or by giving it to a member of Session.

Building Restoration Project Commitments

Now that the congregation approved the much needed Building Restoration Project on December 15, it is exciting to kick-off the detailed planning to keep our building safe and strong! As explained in the November 21 letter from Stewardship, Building & Grounds, and the Pastor, the estimated cost of the project is \$110,000, of which Session has approved using \$30,000 from memorial and special funds. The remaining \$80,000 is to be raised through commitments/pledges beginning now and ending December 31, 2015. Please be sure to pick up a commitment card located at the sanctuary doorways or print one on your own (in newsletter) and drop in the offering or send to the church office. Thank you for your prayerful support of this necessary and worthy project.

Stewardship Campaign and 2014 Commitments

The Stewardship Committee and Session thank you very much for your 2014 commitments/pledges which so far total 36 commitments for \$81,072. If you have not yet had a chance to turn in your commitment, we encourage you to still do so. As a reminder, commitments can be updated throughout the year to reflect changes in circumstances. Expressing your commitment helps Session budget for the best use of projected funds.

2014 Per Capita Dues

2014 per capita dues are \$28.10 per member, or a total of \$3,653.00 for our 130 members. If you are able, please contribute by noting "per capita" with your payment for your family or for others that may not be able to contribute. Of the \$28.10 total dues, \$7.02 supports General Assembly, \$3.25 supports the Synod of the Covenant, and \$17.83 support Maumee Valley Presbytery.



December Financial Report

Beginning Balance	\$20,144.79
Receipts	32,150.48
Expenses	(11,091.96)
Balance	\$41,203.31

Presbytery Commissioner

Are you interested in knowing Maumee Valley Presbytery better? Our church is in need of a Presbytery Commissioner. Presbytery meets 4-5 times each year in different locations in the presbytery (NW Ohio and SE Michigan). Each church is allowed a clergy commissioner, as well as lay commissioners based on church's membership. Darlene Hey has been our most recent commissioner. Only requirement is that you are an elder (does not have to be a currently serving elder). If you are interested in serving, please contact Lori Schmidt or Cathy Carroll.

Youth Group

The Youth Group will meet on January 5 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. We will be ringing in the New Year with laughter! Please bring a favorite "fun" food to share. See Tenna if you have any questions.

Souper Bowl of Caring

The Youth Group will be hosting our annual BPC Basement Bistro to support the Souper Bowl of Caring. Join us on February 2 immediately following worship for a soup luncheon. We will collect a free will offering with proceeds going to the Bluffton Area Community Assistance.

Christian Ed Walkers

Christian Ed Walkers are needed for upcoming dates. Please see the posted sign-up.

Nursery Care

The church has hired Lynsee Lawler and Kori Phipps to provide child care during Sunday School and Worship. This will create a more consistent environment for the toddlers and allow all families to participate in worship. We will no longer be asking for volunteers for the nursery.

Deacons Care Ministry

During this time of transition for Bluffton Presbyterian Church's pastoral care, please remember that the Care Ministry Deacons will be available for support and concerns. Deacons can lend a listening ear, assist with church-related questions, assist with transportation needs, offer prayer, or assist with arranging a pastoral call from an interim spiritual leader if requested. If any concerns arise, please do not hesitate to call Shirley Kisor (419-358-0085), Lin Rumer (419-358-0607), Diane Winebar (419-957-4046), Laura From (419-477-5205) or Don Carroll (419-477-5266). Let each of us surround our church family through prayer in this time of transition.

Mission Committee

The Mission Committee would like to thank everyone who donated food, clothing, or other household requests to the Adopt-a-Family Program. Thanks also to our youth, who donated their time and talents organizing and wrapping the gifts for the families. Through your generous donations, our church was able to bring a little more JOY and LOVE this Christmas to a family with small children and a single woman. With our community's outreach and support, the Bluffton Community Assistance Program was able to help about 60 area families have a brighter Christmas!

Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen

The next Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen serving date will be **Thursday, February 6**. If interested in serving others, please contact Shirley Kisor (419-358-0085). We typically meet at the church parking lot around 9:40 AM and return around 12:30 PM.



Thank you to the congregation for the thoughtful Christmas gift certificate. And thank you to all our wonderful musicians who celebrated the Gift of God on Christmas Eve and throughout the year!

Jayne

I just wanted to thank the congregation for their generous support of the Adopt-a-Family program this year. We have all been truly blessed by God and it was wonderful to see everyone share those blessings so freely. The love we receive from our Heavenly Father was passed beyond the walls of BPC in the form of food, basic necessities, and a few Christmas surprises. I pray that we always respond to the Spirit's call to love and lift up our neighbors.

Tenna



Prayers of Celebration with Geraldine Sullivan-Clark on becoming a member of BPC.

Prayers of Sympathy with Dave Engelhardt and family.

Prayers of Sympathy with the families and friends of Mary Lou, Jane McDowell, and Sara Ginther.

Prayers with the people in the Philippines.

Prayers for Peace in our lives and in our World.

Prayers for our members and friends serving in the armed forces: especially Kyle Begg, Andrew Warner, and Lucas Woodward.

Prayers of Healing for Karen Long, Dusty Klingler, Gordan Diller, Brenda Anderson, Judy Surgent, Curtis Champion, Jill Burkholder, Sylvia Morman, Charles John, Jayne McGarrity, Michael Lee Bucher, Tyler From, John Patterson, Norman Garner, Dave Myles, Stella Tomlin, and Dalton.



BPC Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please contact Diane Winebar (419-957-4046 or dwinebar711@gmail.com), or call the church office (419-358-5806) with your prayer request, and they will pass along the information.

If you would like to be part of the chain or would like more information, please contact Diane or another deacon.

Address Change:

Ben and Judy Miracle
831 Fox Run Rd. – Unit 10
Findlay, OH 45840

Happy Birthday!!



January	3	Dave Sycks Chad Carroll
	7	Dwight Nichols Barb Fett
	10	Sue Basinger Addie McGarrity
	13	Chris Gable Matthew Zuehlke
	21	Colletta Mullenhour
	25	Shirley Kisor
	29	Richard McGarrity
	30	Tammie Hursh
February	2	Jodie Parker
	5	John Marshall



Choir



Linda Sycks rehearsing choir and instrumentalists for Christmas cantata



*Percussion section for Christmas cantata--
Megan Sycks, Tanya Best*

Small Groups



*Tuesday Night Small Group:
Front row (l-r): Julia Szabo, Geraldine Sullivan-Clark, Diane Winebar,
Jeanette Warren, Jayne McGarrity
Back row (l-r): Beth Buist, Carole Enneking, Lori Schmidt
Not pictured: Marilyn Edwards, Laura From, Rhonda Moor, Min Lindsey*

Bluffton Presbyterian Church
2013-15 Building Restoration Project

Recognizing the key role of our church building in the life of our congregation, I/we prayerfully commit as follows towards the critical maintenance project required to keep our building sound. Commitments may be made as an immediate lump sum or periodically between December 2013 and December 2015.

\$_____ total commitment to the project, pledged in the following manner:

\$_____ one-time payment or gift, \$_____ weekly, or \$_____ (monthly)(quarterly)

(signature[s])

(name[s] printed)

This commitment may be updated due to changes in circumstances.

Bluffton Presbyterian Church
112 N. Main St.
P.O. Box 149
Bluffton, OH 45817
419-358-5806

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Matthew Zuehlke
Email: revdrmz@gmail.com
Cell Phone: 567-825-3973
Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 9:30-1:00

Secretary: Cathy Carroll
Email: bpcbluff@wcoil.com
Office Hours: Tues & Wed 9:00-12:30
Website: blufftonpc.org

Sunday School Programs: 9:00 AM
Sunday Worship Service: 10:15 AM

2014 Church Officers

Session

Clerk of Session – Lori Schmidt
Buildings & Grounds – Tom Hursey
Christian Education – Jay McCracken
Finance & Stewardship – Cindy Gillen
Mission – Beth Buist
Nominating – Betsey Angus, Jodi Brauen,
Mike Rhonemus, and Dave Sycks
Personnel – Lori Schmidt
Presbytery Commissioner
Worship – Jeanette Warren
Members at Large – Tom Edwards, Rhonda
Moor, Donnas Stone, and Dave Kisor

Board of Deacons

Moderator: Diane Winebar
Members: Don Carroll, Laura From, Lin
Rumer, and Kay Ziessler.