

FAIRPLAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

-II Corinthians 4:7

Dear friends,

I've never been one for making resolutions, but on New Year's Eve 2019, I decided I wanted to start being intentional about putting some work into my sense of connection with God. Not to make God like me more, mind you (God already does), or bring God closer to me (God is everywhere), but in hopes that I would feel more grounded and connected to God.

I don't think I told anyone, or even called it a resolution, but I restarted writing in a prayer journal on a regular basis. Tried picking up some spiritual practices.

If you've ever made New Year's resolutions, you may be surprised to learn that these journal entries continued for nearly a month and a half, all the way to February 15!

Okay, fine. The entries had begun to trail off well before then, but there *was* an entry for February 15. Then there was a pandemic, and a baby, and the pandemic lasted longer than anyone expected, and that was the end of it.

But that *wasn't* the end of it.

During 2020, and again in 2021, I feel like God used that intention to heal up some places in my heart that had been broken for a long time. Even though I forgot all about the plans I had made to get that growth, God took that little bit of intention, even combined with not very much follow-through, to grow me in the direction I had wanted to go.

Friends, God loves us all the time, whether we're actively trying to connect or not, and I'm beginning to see that all God's love needs is just the slightest opening.

We make plans and resolutions, but God makes the growth. We forget God, but God remembers us. Even when we fail to do the things we resolved, God remembers our hopes and helps draw us closer.

May God draw you closer in 2022.

Pastor David Schell

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have prayer requests that you would like to leave as a voicemail to be played on Sunday morning, you can call 269-332-1118 to leave a message, and we will play it on Sunday morning.



Please join our virtual coffee hour at 10:45am Sundays. You will receive a link if you are subscribed to our email newsletters. You can subscribe at <https://www.fairplainpc.com/newsletters/>.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 2 – Don Myers
- 4 – Mary Bartels
- 16 – Keith Sheppard
- 22 – Michael Hall
- 27 – Dick Machalleck
- 29 – Ryan Schell



MUSIC NEWS

Greetings to all from Psalm 98:4-6

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music. Make music to the Lord with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn. Shout for joy before the Lord, the King.”

The following music groups and soloists enriched our worship experience in December:

December 05 – Family Slavujevic Chimes, Bells and Vocal Ensemble

December 12 – The Praise Band “Wherever Two ...”

December 19 – Chancel Choir (introit and 2 anthems)

December 26 – Family Vajdic/Pena

It is my privilege and joy to inform you that I just completed my 7th year as a music director here at Fairplain. In two words this period could be described as “active” and “vibrant.” Before the pandemic we prepared and performed 5 Christmas programs with a number of guest musicians participating including many children playing the bells and singing. Our 5 organized music groups sang and played regularly: Chancel Choir, The Praise Band “Wherever Two ...,” Ladies’ Chorus, Men’s Chorus, and Family Slavujevic Chimes, Bells and Vocal Ensemble. We were blessed to see 36 of my music students and their families participating during the past 18 months when our choir was inactive due to pandemic restrictions.

Hope that 2022 will be better than this one regarding our church activities.

Here is an interesting article about a famous 18th century English hymnwriter Charles Wesley (1707-1788). He wrote the lyrics for the following songs found in our church hymnal: # 1, 2, 6, 31, 113, 123, 155, 303, 376, 462, 463, 466, 477. This article is adopted from Randy Petersen’s interesting book “Be Still My Soul.”

PART ONE

Even without the hymns, Charles Wesley would have an impressive resume. Trained at Oxford University to be an Anglican minister, he briefly served as a missionary to America. As a preacher, leader, and theologian, he had a profound influence. But then there are those 8000 hymns he wrote, making an average of 3 hymns a week for more than 50 years.

These were not mere ditties or jingles. In “And Can It Be,” Wesley explained that Jesus “emptied himself of all but love, and bled for Adam’s helpless race!” – a dozen words that convey volumes of apostolic theology. In “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing,” he poetically imagined the praises of those healed by our great Redeemer. From “hear him, ye deaf” to “leap, ye lame, for joy,” we marvel at his artistic precision. How could Wesley pack so much truth into so few syllables?

Continued on Page 4 ...

MUSIC NEWS CONTINUED ...

Charles was the 18th of 19 children born to Samuel Wesley, a minister, and his wife Susanna, a brilliant woman who taught her children for 6 hours a day. Brother John was 4 years older than Charles, and they lived remarkably parallel lives.

Both John and Charles Wesley studied at Oxford University, where Charles gathered a group of like-minded men into a group they called the Holy Club. This group sought methodical ways to live holy lives, an approach that reflected the best and the worst of their spiritual condition. They longed for a greater relationship with God, but they sought to acquire it through a regimen of “holy” actions. Both men were ordained to the ministry and even served as missionaries in the American colony of Georgia. This trip proved disappointing, although it did bring them into contact with some Moravian Christians, who impressed them with their faith (singing hymns in the ship during a terrible storm) and their heart for God.

Back in England in 1738, both brothers had conversion experiences, Charles 3 days before John. On May 17, 1738, Charles wrote in his journal, “I labored, waited, and prayed to feel ‘who loved me and gave himself to me.’” 4 days later he wrote, “I now found myself at peace with God.” Two days later, Charles started writing hymns about this new relationship. John wrote about having his heart “strangely warmed” by God’s presence.

TO BE CONTINUED

People say that the time right after Christmas is the most depressing part of a year. The Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year’s celebrations are over... Daylight is short and nights are long... This is the coldest and darkest part of a year... But, let us look at the bright side. Days are very gradually becoming longer every day and the winter will eventually “give up” and turn to spring. Let us count our blessings and be a blessing to others during this winter.

Hope your Christmas 2021 was memorable. Wish you all a

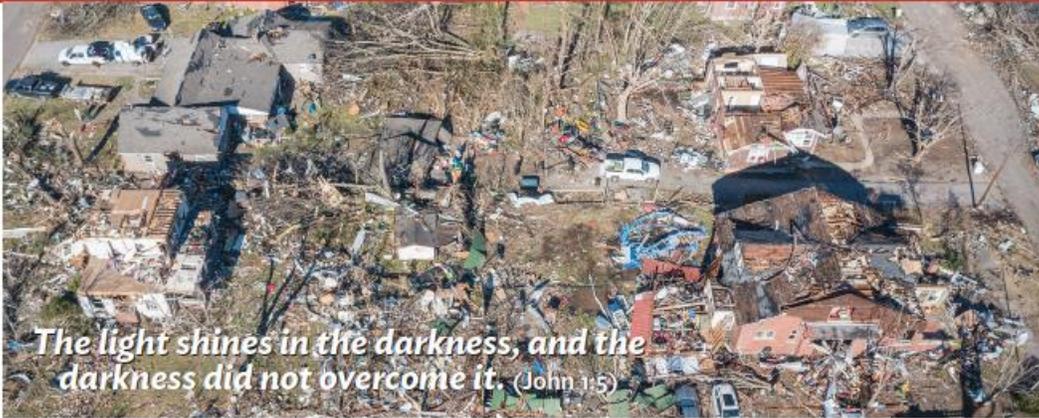
Happy and Blessed New Year 2022

Yours,

Vladimir Slavujevic
Director of Music



God is our refuge and strength



Mayfield, Ky., Dec. 12, 2021. Courtesy of State Farm (CC BY 2.0)

As night fell on December 10, powerful tornadoes ripped across several states, ending the lives of more than 100 people and wreaking devastation across many communities by morning. In the wake of these catastrophic storms, it is the role of people of faith to shine as light in this bleakest of winters. We are called to be the hands and feet of God to help to rebuild the lives of those who have experienced significant loss. We are invited to stand with them — and to stand together — bearing witness by our gifts and prayers that God is indeed incarnate among us.

GIVE: Gifts can be made online at pcusa.org/DT21, by phone at (800) 872-3283, or by check using the below reply device. Text PDA to 41444 to donate.

ACT: • Gift of the Heart Kits are a hands-on way to help others this Advent season (pcusa.info/heart).

- To register your interest in future rebuilding efforts, email PDA.CallCenter@pcusa.org. You will be notified when volunteer opportunities are available.



Stay informed and like us on Facebook (facebook.com/PDAcares), download resources at pda.pcusa.org/pda/resources and share updates with your congregation.

PRAY: *As we learn of another natural disaster, we pray. For those experiencing loss, may they feel comfort only your Holy Spirit can bring. We pray for wisdom and strength as they work to restore and repair their communities. May we heed your call, o God, to be co-creators with you in the caring of creation. May the hope, peace and love of the Christ child comfort and keep us all.*

-Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, President and Executive Director, Presbyterian Mission Agency

\$500 \$125 \$50 \$25 Other \$ _____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Congregation/PIN _____

Please detach the reply form and return it with your gift to your church; or enclose it in an envelope with your check and mail it to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.



DT21-BI

CLERK'S REPORT FOR JANUARY

How did we get to 2022 so quickly?

First of all, I'd like to welcome Bill and Ann Cundiff to membership to Fairplain Presbyterian. They have been loyal participants in our church family for several years. If it were not for Bill, we would not have had "streaming" up and running and ready to go when the pandemic hit. He got us streaming way before Covid 19 entered our lives. Welcome to both of you.

On a much sadder note, I signed the document transferring the membership of Fred and Sandy Welch to the Westminster Presbyterian Church. Having moved two years ago, they decided it was time to put their time, talents, and treasure into the church they are now attending. We wish them well, but they are missed.

We have a lot going on at Fairplain Presbyterian. First of all, we need for you to turn in your pledge card if you have not already done so. We are working to put a budget together that will take us through 2022. It helps to know how much we have to work with.

Our Per Capita for 2022 is \$36.73. Please send a check to the office or drop it in the offering plate. The per capita has caused a ripple effect this year. We are expected to pay Presbytery \$36.73 for each of our members. We had several people on the membership list that no longer actively participate in Fairplain's church family. Session sent thirteen people a letter asking if they wanted to remain on our membership rolls. None of them want to remain so those folks have been removed from membership. We did receive a note from Nancy Kodis telling us that Matthew is getting married in May and that Sam and his wife are expecting their first baby in March.

As a result of removing fifteen people and adding two, we now have an active membership of 58 people.

Plan to stay after church for a bit on January 9. We need to have an unhang of the greens. The church has looked so pretty this year. It's not like we have done anything that different, but for some reason I am really enjoying the Christmas feeling.

Welcome to a new year!

Marlene Smith-Clerk

PLEDGE CARDS

Pledge cards are needed so we may create a 2022 Budget. These may be returned in the offering plate, mailed or dropped off to the church office or by contacting Jill Wendel directly.

Offering Envelopes may be picked up in the courtyard by the name tags. If you cannot find your name for envelopes and would like some, please contact Jill Wendel.

Year End Offering Statements will be completed by the end of January. If you're not sure about your remaining pledge amount for 2021, please contact Jill Wendel.

Jill can be reached by Email: jillannwendel@yahoo.com or by Phone/Text 269-245-6878. Thank you!

DEACONS

These Days Request: If you would like a copy of the current January – March These Days devotionals, please contact the church office and speak to Linda.

YELLOW PEW ENVELOPES

The yellow envelopes have been reprinted for your donations toward Deacons General/Funeral Fund and Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen and are in the pews. Since we're not worshiping in the church building until the stay-home-stay-safe order is lifted, you can just make a note in the memo line of a check mailed to the church.

Deacons General Fund:

Goes towards the purchase of communion cups, oil for candles, Advent wax candles, flowers for shut-ins (Christmas and Easter), printed support materials for members: These Days devotional, Care Notes (various topics), greeting cards and postage for members; CD players for shut-ins.

Deacons Funeral Fund:

Goes towards any funeral luncheon expenses that are not reimbursed by the family.

Checks for donations to the Deacons General Fund and/or Funeral Fund should be made payable to Fairplain Presbyterian Church. Include "Deacons" in the memo line.

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the members of Fairplain Presbyterian Church, rejoice in God's grace and redeeming love through Jesus Christ. We believe we have been called as God's children to create an open and welcoming community, to worship and praise God, and to nurture and support each other. We are called to develop our God-given gifts and to equip ourselves to reach out to the world in love and compassion. Thus prepared, we will share our faith, preach the gospel, feed the hungry, and be peacemakers according to God's will.

CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. David Schell, pastor@fairplainpc.com

Linda Cogswell, Church Secretary – church email: office@fairplainpc.com

Vladimir Slavujevic, Director of Music – email: vladimirslavujevic5@gmail.com

Muyu Zou, Pianist – email: Raining1@gmail.com

Jody Pauley, Nursery Attendant – email: jodypauley1@gmail.com

Diane Cronk, Co-Treasurer – email: dcronk@comcast.net

Jenna McAllister, Co-Treasurer – email: jennabetz@comcast.net

Jill Wendel, Financial Secretary – email: jillannwendel@yahoo.com

Bud Cornelius, Custodian

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Linda Cogswell, Church Secretary, is in the church office during the following days/hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 8:30 am-noon and 1:00-3:00 pm

Wednesday: Church Office closed

Friday: 9:00 am-11:30 am