



THE LINK ~ December, 2017

When I was in Vermont, one of the unique individuals I was privileged to meet was Willard Eggleston. He is with the Lord now, but he would not mind me telling you his real name. He would smile and shake his head and say, "Awww Cafrin..." (Willard had some challenges that affected his walking, balance and speech but he got where he needed to go and when he spoke, what he said was worth hearing.) I think he would be surprised and humbly glad to see in print something that I told him more than once – that he really understood what it meant to be a member of a church.

Willard was one of the most genuine people I have ever met. I don't know how old he was when I became pastor of the yoked Ryegate Churches, but he was not a young man even then. He lived in a small apartment just a few blocks from the church. His favorite chair was strategically placed by the front window. There was often a Bible on the table nearby and maybe a puzzle in progress. For many years Willard rarely missed a ball game at the high school and he never missed church. He could walk to the South Ryegate Presbyterian Church from his apartment – just down the road a little and over the bridge. He was there every Sunday and for every covered dish dinner or event we had. He faithfully supported the Blue Mountain Bucks sports teams and he loved to come to worship. I soon learned that Willard was a beloved fixture in the community where he had worked on area farms for years.

It was curious to me that as much as Willard was in church, he had never joined. From time to time I would ask him and he would look down and defer without explaining. One night at a covered dish supper we were talking and I asked again if he might consider becoming a member. I told him that some of the young people were preparing to join and that it would be a good time if he wanted to be a part of their group. He was quiet for a moment. Then he looked

up with tears in his eyes and said, "Aw, Cafrin' – I can't join the church. I don't have money to give very much." His words left me speechless, humbled, and so glad to finally know what had prevented him from joining. I don't know why he thought how much he could give was an issue. It had never been preached or taught that I knew of. He did understand, however, that supporting the church was just what one did, and he thought he did not have the means to do enough. I assured him that he most certainly could join – that his presence was a gift in itself and that it was time he heard what was expected of members so that he could consider taking that step. He applied himself to the member preparation process with an enthusiasm that was good for others to see, especially the 6th graders who met for their own class after school. The young people were delighted that Willard might be joining with them. One night not too long after that, he and several of them went before the session to profess their faith.

One of my most treasured memories of the years as the South Ryegate pastor was the day Willard Eggleston joined the church. The sixth graders were rightly proud to join when he did. He continued to come every Sunday for the rest of his life, giving what he could when he could when the offering plate was passed, and giving of himself in other ways that blessed us all. Willard reminded us that it is important to give what we have in money, in presence, and by being willing to be ourselves, to share our gifts of all kinds – and to glorify and enjoy God with God's people at every opportunity. Thank you, Willard, from us all.

As we consider how God would have us support the church, may we be blessed with Willard's understanding that God wants us to take seriously our responsibility to support the church financially, and to give thought to our stewardship of the other things with which God has blessed us. Whether we are four, forty, or ninety-four; whether we are physically able to attend worship services or participating from a distance; whatever our circumstances or resources, giving what we can, prayerfully, week by week, binds us more closely not only to the Lord in whose name we gather, but to one another.

~Dr. M. Catherine Cook

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Sunday, November 26

11:30 a.m.—Coordinating Council meeting

Sunday, December 3

11:30-Session meeting (following the congregational meeting)

Monday, December 4

Noon—Worship Unit meeting

5:30 p.m.—Spiritual Life Unit meeting

Sunday, December 18

5:30 p.m.—Deacons meeting

GENERAL INFORMATION

Sunday, December 3-Advent begins

11:30 a.m.— The Session of First Presbyterian Church has called a special meeting of the congregation for Sunday, December 3rd, immediately after the 10:30 worship service, for the purpose of hearing and acting on the report of the Pulpit Nominating Committee.

Sunday, December 10, Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderator of the General Assembly of PCUSA, will be preaching here. That afternoon, she will lead a seminar in Fellowship Hall. Everyone (not just Elders and Deacons) are invited to come hear her speak. Watch the bulletins for more details.

Monday, December 25—Tuesday, December 26—The Church Offices and the Playschool will be closed for a Christmas break.

DECEMBER WORSHIP INFORMATION

We will have several supply pastors filling the pulpit this month. December 3: Dr. M. Catherine Cook; December 10: Jan Edmiston, co-moderator of the General Assembly; December 17: Rev. Barron Banks; December 24: Rev. Barron Banks; and December 31: Rev. Dr. Leon Bracey.

On Sunday, December 24, we will have our normal morning services at 8:15 and 10:30; however, we will NOT have an evening Christmas Eve service or a Christmas Day service this year.

Advent devotion books are available in the Sanctuary, Stratton Chapel and the Church Office.

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP

*Whoever welcomes a little child in my name, welcomes me.
Matthew 18:5*

A nursery is provided for infants through 4 years old from 8 a.m. until noon on Sunday mornings and at appropriate times for all other church functions. We do, however, welcome children of all ages in our services!

For older children, Children’s Bulletins, along with activity bags filled with paper, puzzles, color pages, and crayons are provided. You may leave the bags in the pews at the end of the service and we’ll replenish them for the next week!

SPIRITUAL LIFE UNIT

Wonderful Wednesdays suppers begin at 5:15 p.m. and are \$6.00 per plate (maximum of \$20.00 per family), followed at 6:00 p.m. by an Adult Bible Study led by Charles Hall, youth activities and Bible study led by Ralph Loe and Helen Smith, and Children’s Bible activities taught by Diane Hammers. *The annual Wed. night Christmas Dinner will be December 13.* Wonderful Wednesday will take a holiday break. It will resume on Wednesday, January 10.

The Men’s Prayer Breakfast meets each Tuesday morning at 7:00 a.m. for prayer. They, too, would enjoy having your company.

For more information about any of these groups, please contact the church office (601-442-2581).

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE UNIT

On Sunday, December 17, at 9:15 a.m., we will have a Christmas covered dish breakfast in Fellowship Hall. Join us for great food and fellowship! Short Sunday School classes will follow the breakfast. All are welcome!

MISSION UNIT

FPC is once again providing a drop-off location for **Toys for Tots**. From now through December 11, you may bring *new, unwrapped* gifts for children ages 1-18. The drop-off box is located in the church office.

Toys for Tots is a program run by the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve which distributes toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy them gifts for Christmas. Your donation will send a message of hope and love that will brighten Christmas for children in our community.

MEN’S PRAYER BREAKFAST

Tuesdays, December 5, 12, 19
7:00 a.m. — Men’s Prayer Breakfast



PLAYSCHOOL

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV)

If you would like to volunteer to read to some of the Playschool classes, please contact Aretha Davis, Director, at 601-445-0700.



Youth Sunday School meets each Sunday at 9:15 a.m.

Youth Bible Study and activities meet each Wednesday.
Teachers: Ralph Loe & Helen Smith



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

This year, we will again be working with the Senior Citizen Center to provide Christmas gifts for some of the neediest seniors. We will not be collecting any specific items, but rather, asking for monetary donations. The money will be used to purchase the items in order that every gift bag will have the same items.

If you would like to make a donation, make checks out to the Presbyterian Women and mark it for the Senior Citizen Project. Cash will be accepted, too. For further information, please contact Leigh Anderson.

Wednesday, December 6

9:30 a.m. PW Christmas Coffee in the Parlor of Stratton Chapel-all the women of FPC (members and friends) are invited

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Tuesdays, December 5, 12 & 19
2:00 p.m. For location, contact Sue Ann Wilt (601-445-2242).



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- December 9 Todd Mooney
- December 12 Ginny Borum
Burne Sharp
- December 13 Wayne Murphy
- December 14 Piper Mophett
Lee Jones
Ron Jinkins
- December 17 Wessye Heard
- December 19 Howard Jones
- December 20 Rusty Jenkins
Lane Rehms
- December 23 Judy Moody
- December 30 Daye Dearing

POINSETTIA ORDERS

Poinsettia orders in memory of or in honor of loved ones are being taken now. The cost is \$20; we will place the order for you. **Deadline: December 11.**

In MEMORY OF

1. _____

Given By: _____

2. _____

Given By: _____

In HONOR OF

1. _____

Given By: _____

2. _____

Given By: _____

The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-20 (NRSV)

²In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.



First Presbyterian Church
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601-442-2581

FPC OFFICERS

ELDERS:

Class of 2017

Tanna Davis, Marc Doyle, Ralph Loe, Aaron Shermer

Class of 2018

Chuck Borum, Sarah Carey, Mary Jo McNerney,
Anne Vidal Willet

Class of 2019

Rosemary Hall, Bobby Meason, Danna Mooney, Helen
Smith

ELDERS -ELECT

Class of 2020

Hal Hicks, Leigh Anderson, Phyllis Mashburn, Ken
Andermann

DEACONS:

Class of 2017

Donna Ball, Sandy Lane, Susanna Sharp

Class of 2018

Jon Borum, Diane Hammers, Esther Jeffus

Class of 2019

Sandra Burkes, Denise Seale, Sarah Smith

DEACONS-ELECT

Class of 2020

Eddie Christian, Ryan Sharp, Gwen Washington