Since several of you have asked me to print an outline of my sermon based on the carol, “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” I’ve decided to use this song as a starting point for my reflections this month. Tradition tells us that this beloved carol may have been used as a teaching tool during the 16th and 17th centuries to help instruct young children and new believers in the Christian faith. In an era where both illiteracy and the threat of religious persecution was too common, this song represented a creative way to share key theological and biblical truths. With each day, a new gift is given that holds both a literal and hidden meaning which only the faithful would understand.

**Partridge** - Jesus Christ, our Savior
   “For God so loved the world....” John 3:16

**Two Turtle Doves** - Old and New Testaments

**Three French Hens** - Gifts of Faith, Hope and Love
   “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.” 1 Cor. 13:13

**Four Calling Birds** - Four Gospels
   *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*

**Five Golden Rings** - Five Books of Moses
   *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*

**Six Geese Laying** - Six Days of Creation
   *Genesis 1*

**Seven Swans Swimming** - Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

**Eight Maids Milking** - Eight Beatitudes
   *Matthew 5:3-10*

**Nine Ladies Dancing** - Nine Fruit of the Spirit
   *Galatians 5:22-23*

**Ten Lords Leaping** - 10 Commandments
   *Exodus 20*

**Eleven Pipers Piping** - 11 faithful disciples

**Twelve Drummers Drumming** - The Apostle’s Creed
   *Twelve points of the Apostles’ Creed*

With the start of a New Year, there is always an invitation to consider what action steps we might take in the year ahead to grow or develop. This year, would you consider the
words of this song and make a commitment to grow into a deeper understanding of the Christian faith? If you’ve never memorized the Apostles’ Creed or the Ten Commandments, why not make that a goal? Or maybe you’ll want to identify one of the attributes of the Christian life, such as joy, love, or patience, represented in Galatians 5 and prayerfully ask God to help you cultivate that gift in your life. Christmas reminds us that Christ came to change our lives for today and forever. And that is something worth singing about!

Have a blessed New Year.

2013 Church Audit

Sharlene White is conducting an audit of our church’s financial systems and procedures for 2013. Please look at your 2013 statement of contribution and make sure you agree with it. If you agree, DO NOTHING. If there is a discrepancy, please contact Sharlene and explain the problem. DO NOT REVEAL THE AMOUNT OF YOUR CONTRIBUTION.

Ways to contact Sharlene:

- Call her at home, 419-668-9720 and leave a message.
- Email Sharlene at russnshar@hotmail.com.
- Send or drop off a note at the church, IN A SEALED ENVELOPE, addressed to Sharlene.

Random Acts of Grace

Several Random Acts of Grace tags have been returned to the church office in the past few weeks. It is wonderful to see God working through our congregation as we touch our community and challenge ourselves to be disciples of Christ. Pray for God to open our eyes as well as our hearts and allow us to become a blessing to others.

Culinary Cruising Returns

The time is approaching to sign up for winter culinary cruising! This is an opportunity for adult members and friends of the church to get to know some of our church family better. You will meet at a host’s home to share a dinner and fellowship together. Sign up sheets will be in Fellowship Hall on January 19 and 26.

Birthday Bunch

You are invited to join the Birthday Bunch the 2nd Tuesday of each month at East of Chicago at 12:30 p.m. Everyone is invited whether it’s your birthday this month or not. For more information contact June Knoll, 419-668-3505.
Adult Education Classes
9:30 a.m. in the Great Room

**Faith of Our Founding Fathers**
January 5, 12, 19
Led by Nancy Gfell

Many historians, educators and scholars have researched and debated the faith of the men who created our nation. If you are interested in taking a brief look at whether our founding fathers were men of strong faith or simply enlightened deists, please join us for the first 3 Sundays in January.

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**The Prodigal God**
January 26, February 2, 9
Led by Norm Sommers

In *The Prodigal God*, the parable of the Prodigal Son is used to reveal an unexpected message of hope and salvation. Within that parable, Jesus reveals God's prodigal grace toward both the irreligious and the moralistic. This class will challenge both the devout and the skeptic to see Christianity in a whole new way.

Home Builders Couples Class
9:30 a.m. in Rooms 112/114

“Home Builders,” meets on Sundays and is led by Joel and Wende Mersereau, and Curt and Jackie Markley. This class is designed to help couples grow deeper in their Christian faith by looking at Biblical principles for a Godly marriage and home.

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**News of Our Church Family**

**Address Change**

Carol Hartzell
424 Townline Road 151
Norwalk, OH 44857

**Grieving**

Diane Eschen on the passing of her mother, Mary Meyer on December 26.

**Congratulations:**

Congratulations to Ryan and Vanessa Winkler on the birth of their son, Declan Mark born on November 20. Declan is the grandson of Carolyn Winkler and the late Mark Winkler.

Congratulations to Andy and Stacey Carr on the birth of their daughter, Katie Ann, born on November 26. Katie is the granddaughter of Bill and Becky Carr, and niece of Megan Carr.

Congratulations to Ernie and Courtney Jenkins on the birth of their son, Noah, born on December 4. Noah is the grandson of Mike and Jenny Jenkins.

**“Novel Idea” Book Club**

Sunday, January 26 at 7 p.m.
in the Church Library

**The Aviator’s Wife**

by Melanie Benjamin

*The Aviator’s Wife* takes us behind the scenes of the woman, Anne Morrow, who married Charles Lindbergh. The author draws on rich history from the late 20’s to the mid 60’s, writing a novel revealing insights into what made the remarkable Lindbergh relationship endure.
Sunday School News

Congratulations to Jack Bailey and Mia Strong for becoming a member of the 100 point club. Sunday school students can achieve their 100 point status by memorizing Bible verses, retelling Bible stories from class, attending Sunday School, bringing friends, bringing their Bible, and praying out loud during class.

Just a reminder that our second and third grade Sunday School students are encouraged to memorize the books of the New Testament, while the fourth and fifth grade students will be reciting the books of the Old Testament. If your child already completed the task and would like to recite them again, a second year prize will be awarded. See Mrs. Wheeler when you are ready.

Thank You! Thank You!

A HUGE thank you to Diane Eschen for coordinating and preparing a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner for our seniors. We are blessed that you are so willing to give your time to such a worthwhile project.

Thanks to all who helped make this year’s ADVENTures, Christmas Around the World, such a success. It’s great to have so many willing hands in our congregation to help make the Holiday season special.

Many thanks to all who participated in our Mitten Tree project in December. We collected 90 pairs of mittens/gloves, 78 hats, and 11 scarves. The children in the Norwalk area will have warm hands because of your generous donations.

Rush Hour

3rd-6th grades
Wednesdays, 4:00-5:30 p.m.

January 1
No meeting, Happy New Year.

January 8
Bowling at Kenilee Lanes. Bring $6.00

January 15
Regular meeting at the church.

January 22
Regular meeting at the church.

January 29
Regular meeting at the church.

Just a reminder...if the weather is bad and school is cancelled there will be no Rush Hour.

Do You Have a College Student?

Rush Hour students will be making “care” packages for our college students. Contact Kathleen Wheeler at KWheeler@firstpresbyterian.net with names and addresses by February 1 so we can remember them with a special surprise.

Children and Worship

If you would like to donate snacks for the Children and Worship “feast” time, please drop them off in the CE office. Ideas: graham crackers, animal crackers, pretzels, cheese crackers, apples, fruit snacks and other kid friendly snack foods. Thanks for your support.
Christian Education Youth

Catalyst (7th-12th grades)

Special Events

8th-12th grades
The Pittsburgh Project Information Meeting
Sunday, January 12
6 p.m.

Anyone interested in attending The Pittsburgh Project this summer should plan to attend the information meeting for parents and students currently in 8th-12th grades. We will meet in the Youth Room.

Catalyst “Afternoon-ahari”
Friday, January 17
1-7 p.m.

Invite your friends to a fun-filled few hours at Kalahari from 1-7 p.m. The cost is $25. For details, see Brandon or check the youth newsletter.

Parent/Confirmand Meeting
Sunday, January 19
9:30 a.m.

There will be a meeting for all parents and students in the Confirmation Room, across from nursery, for who will be in the 2014 Confirmation Class on Sunday, January 19 during the 9:30 a.m. Sunday School hour.

Confirmation Mini-Retreat
Friday, January 24
5-9 p.m.

Students and mentors please mark your calendars for the Confirmation mini retreat on Friday, January 24.

College Students

Will Crosby
Evans Hall - Scott Quad
Room 212
88 University Terrace
Athens, OH 45701

Xander Crosby
84 Old Farm Lane
Boularderie Center, N.S.
CANADA B1X 1K5

Scrapbooking Fun

The Outreach Committee is sponsoring a free scrapbooking event the second Sunday of every month. Join us on Sunday, January 12, from 6-9 p.m. in the Great Room for the next get-together. Bring your own snacks, drinks and supplies. Be ready for fun and fellowship. Bring a friend also.

Check out our new Facebook page: First Presbyterian Church, Norwalk. “Like” us to learn about upcoming events at the church and use our new Facebook page to invite your friends.
Thank You

I would like to thank all of those that made the Senior/Youth Thanksgiving dinner possible this year. What an awesome group of volunteers that make this dinner possible!

Thanks also to the youth group and of course to our special guests that attend. It is always great to see such a large number of people coming out for this event.

My family is very grateful for all the visits from Adrian and Clair to my mom and all of the thoughts and prayers for my mom as well as for Jackie. Jackie is doing much better.

Thanks again for being the best church family and God bless you all.

Diane Eschen

_________________

To my Dear Church Family,

I am doing well in Wylie, Texas at my son, Dan’s and his wife, Barbara’s house. And we have 12 year old Emily and sometimes 15 year old Sarah and 14 month old Schnauzer-Terrier, Cookie. Sarah lives most of the time with her biological father. Thanks to everyone for the prayers, cards, visits and kindnesses. I so appreciate y’all!!!

Jane Kerkhoff

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News From the Session
December, 2013

Monte Sinai, the first new church in MVP in over 30 years, officially changed its name to Christian Community of Restoration and Revival, and relocated to Norwalk.

The Deacons reach out in love on birthdays and during Advent to our forty-eight 80+ year old members.

All money for the projector system and the first year salary of the Worship Media Coordinator, Kayliann Matter, was donated.

Peggy Case beautifully decorated the chancel for Thanksgiving.

Joyce Ditz led the Christmas decorating committee of Karen Becker, Jon Ditz, Reggie and Judy Etherington, Carolyn Hartzell, Bob Huston, Judy Sommers, Bob and Marsha Sands, Reta Stark and Janel Doll. Artist Jan Fegley designed and painted the bulletin cover for the Christmas services.

Orders for the 2014 Chancel Flowers will be taken following worship services or by calling the office.

Rev. Doll will use two weeks of study leave in January to attend Columbia Seminary to continue his Doctor of Ministry degree.

Session approved the use of a meeting room for ACT on Monday evenings at 7pm.

The Mission Committee delivered Christmas baskets to needy families in Norwalk.

Rush Hour students raked leaves and the Youth Groups helped at the Community Work Day.

Alice Pleasnick gifted a table top ice maker to the church.

The annual meeting of our congregation will take place on Sunday, January 26 following the 10:45 worship service.
# Serving in January

## Ushers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Names</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Scot Davidson Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Bob and Marilyn Huston, Curt Markley Family</td>
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## Coffee Hour

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jennifer Greco</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Miller Family</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Jan Fegley</td>
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<td>Greg Graves Small Group</td>
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## Flower Delivery

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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Brian Pancost</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Russ White</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Kelly Cook</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Tricia Harrel-King</td>
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## Greeters

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<tr>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Hiler Family, Bob and Marilyn Huston</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Hiler Family, Adam Sommers Family</td>
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## Children and Worship:

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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tracey Sommers</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Kathleen Wheeler</td>
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<td>Kristin Miller</td>
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<td>Tracy Konik</td>
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## Separate Flowers

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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Judy Sommers</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Patricia Tkach</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Bev Miller</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Sandy Shope</td>
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## CD Ministry

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<td>5</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Bob Sands</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Becca Schumm</td>
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<td>Karen Becker</td>
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## Nursery

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<tr>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Jennifer Bailey</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Judy Douglas, Jennifer Bailey</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Barb McDaniel</td>
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<td>Debb Esch</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Aundrea Gordon</td>
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## Screen Door Caller

Wende Mersereau

## Liturgist:

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<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Curt Markley</td>
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<td>Bev Miller</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Wes Douglas</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Chris Canfield</td>
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The Mission of First Presbyterian Church Is to Worship and Serve Jesus Christ.

We fulfill this mission as we:

Worship The Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
Grow in our understanding of the Christian faith;
Care for each other;
Share Christ’s love with the world in word and deed; and
Give of our time, talent, and treasure in gratitude for God’s grace.