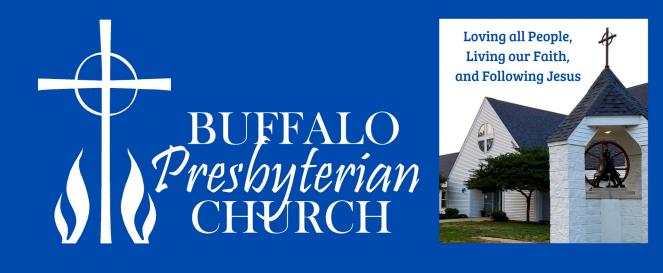
### December 2024 THE NEW TIMES



### Inside this issue:

Missions	3
Calendar	4
Volunteers	6
Session	7

### Classes, Coffee, & Conversations

December 1 Deck the Halls & Chili Feed

### December 8

Congregational Meeting & 150th Planning Update

### December 15

Pastor Brian

December 22

Coffee & Treats

### December 29

Coffee & Treats

We hope you enjoy our monthly newsletter, **The New Times.** 

For comments and suggestions, please contact the BPC office.







When thinking of darkness we often think of fearful, negative, or even evil things. Our society often equates dark with bad and light with good, most notably in anti-Black racism that has been a part of our culture for hundreds of years. Some of these perceptions of darkness as scary are completely understandable, as children how many of us were afraid of the dark? I know I was. Some adults still get scared when the sun sets and the lights go out.

This time of year often brings with it more dark and light imagery, whether in the candles of an Advent wreath, the lights on a Christmas tree, or the illumination of a Hanukkah menorah. The cheer and warmth that lights and flames bring on the cold dark winter nights are worth tending as they often guide us through some hard days and nights. The problem

## The Blessings of Darkness

though is that to relegate the darkness to always being bad or negative removes from it the pregnant possibility it so often nurtures.

In scripture we see multiple instances, spoken or unspoken, where blessing, covenant, and life are given. In Genesis Jacob wrestled with a figure, who we learn was in fact God, all night and in the darkness right before dawn Jacob demands a blessing from God and it is given. Many times throughout the Hebrew scriptures we see God appear shrouded in cloud. We see this when God comes to the Israelites on Mount Sinai and then again when God fills the newly built temple in 1st Kings.

> And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD,

Then Solomon said,

"The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. -1 Kings 8:10-12

In these instances God appears and is said to live in darkness, the clouds in which God comes are so dense that light does not penetrate them, yet it is from that darkness that God makes and keeps covenant with God's people.

God resides in darkness in a different and uniquely human way when God incarnates in Mary's womb. In the gentle darkness of Mary's belly God grows and develops in the person of Jesus. Once again Jesus takes hold of life in the darkness when early on Easter morning he rises from death in the dark of the garden tomb, soon to be opened and emptied. It is in the dark that life is given, both for Jesus but also for us. Just as Jesus grew and gained life in Mary's womb, so each of us came to life in the wombs of our mothers. Just as Jesus rose from death in the dark of a tomb, so too will we one day rise to new life.

These and other scripture passages show us the possibility of the darkness to nurture, grow, and aid us in life. Darkness has so much to offer, it need not be our constant enemy, for to make it so is to write it off as scary, less than, and downright evil.

The dark can be a place where life and creativity are nurtured. The dark can be a place of promise and blessing. The dark can be a place of beauty and rest. So as the days get shorter and the dark of night lengthens, may you learn not to fear the darkness, but instead to embrace it as teacher, shelter, and place of possibility.

Blessings,

Pastor Brian

"The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. -1 Kings 8:10-12

## Missions

## Rivers of Hope Gift Cards

Please drop off gift cards into the office drop box by Wednesday, December 4th.

# Adopt-a-Family

We have our Adopt a Family shopping list. Please use the link below to mark what you would like to purchase for this family. All items need to be at BPC by December 8th. Also, please have the gift receipts for any sizing issues. Thank you for your generosity!

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4AAAA72AA3FDCE9-53528252-adopt

## Craft & Bake Sale

We have received \$7,831.03 so far from the Craft and Bake Sale!! An amazing outcome!!

# Christmas Joy Offering

Your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering make a huge difference in the lives of our leaders — past, present and future. This offering provides assistance to current workers and their families in their time of need, and develops our future leaders at Presbyterian –related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. To give online go to pcusa.org/christmasjoy or text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999. We will also be collecting this offering on December 22nd.

# Presbyterian Giving Catalog

Are you looking for a unique gift this year? Check out the Presbyterian Giving Catalog! There are several gifts to choose from! To give online: presbyteriangifts.org or see the catalogs in the narthex.

# Community Spaghetti Supper

Join us on January 4th from 4:30pm—6pm for our next Community Spaghetti Supper! We will be looking for volunteers, so watch for a sign up sheet outside the office.



"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

John 13:34

# December 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
01 9:30AM WORSHIP W/COMMUNION 10:30AM CCC: DECK THE HALLS & CHILI FEED	IUNION SHAWL GROUP LADIES CCC: DECK 9AM MEN'S		040510:30AM PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MTG7:30AM PEOPLE OF FAITH7PM ADULT CHOIR10AM WOMEN OF FAITH		06	07
08 9:30AM WORSHIP 10:30AM CCC: CONGREGATIONAL MTG & 150TH PLANNING UPDATE	09 5PM FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE MTG	10 9AM CRAFTY LADIES 9AM MEN'S BREAKFAST 5PM MISSIONS COMMITTEE MTG 6:30PM FINANCE COMMITTEE MTG	11 6PM 150TH PLANNING MTG 7PM ADULT CHOIR	12 7:30AM PEOPLE OF FAITH 10AM WOMEN OF FAITH 5:30PM RACIAL JUSTICE READING GROUP	13	14
15 9:30AM WORSHIP 10:30AM CCC: PASTOR BRIAN 11:30AM WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE MTG	16 4PM DEACONS MTG	17 9AM CRAFTY LADIES 9AM MEN'S BREAKFAST 6:30PM SESSION	18 7PM ADULT CHOIR	19 7:30AM PEOPLE OF FAITH 10AM WOMEN OF FAITH 5:30PM RACIAL JUSTICE READING GROUP 7PM COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MTG	20	21
22 9:30AM WORSHIP: FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS CANTATA 10:30AM CCC: COFFEE & TREATS	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 9AM CRAFTY LADIES 9AM MEN'S BREAKFAST 4PM CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 7:30AM PEOPLE OF FAITH 10AM WOMEN OF FAITH 5:30PM RACIAL JUSTICE READING GROUP	27	28
29 9:30AM WORSHIP 10:30AM CCC: COFFEE & TREATS	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 9AM CRAFTY LADIES 9AM MEN'S BREAKFAST	01	02	03	04



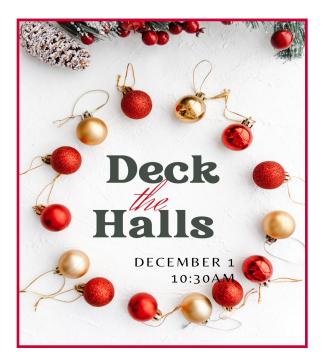
Buffalo Presbyterian Church became official on December 10, 1875. There will be many opportunities to honor this 150th anniversary and we want to make sure you have all of them on your calendar! Here is the list of events and a little about each one.

> 2025 will be a big year for BPC. 150 years and counting!!

Loving all people, Living our Faith, and Following Jesus.







Below is the pledged giving update through the end of November 2024.

#### 2024 YTD Pledged Giving Update Pledged Given % **General Fund** 93% 142,392 131,722 61% **Building Fund** 5,947 3,611 82% Per Capita 1,964 1,610

We have also received an additional \$20,217 in Non-Pledged giving to date.

# December Volunteer Schedule

Service Date	Coffee Time	Greeters	Lay Leader	Sound Board	Ushers	
12/1	Deck the Halls	Kellie Johnson & Larry Pattee	Barb Janski	Mike Quady	Dave Johnson & Kevin Spike	
12/8	Mary Coleman & Linda Shebiel	Charlie Wilkens & Liz Klaassen	Kathy Quady	Eric Ellwoods	Dave Johnson & Kevin Spike	
12/15	Michele Lawlor & Mary Markve- Patch	Elaine Thole & Larry Janski	Kellie Johnson	Chuck Klaassen	Dave Johnson & Kevin Spike	
12/22	Dave & Jean Johnson	Kellie Johnson & Larry Pattee	Kathy Quady & Larry Janski	Mike Quady	Dave Johnson & Kevin Spike	
12/24	Christmas Eve					
12/29	Doth Family	Mike & Kathy Quady	Lisa Ellwoods	Eric Ellwoods	Dave Johnson & Kevin Spike	
1/5	Fellowship Committee	Charlie Wilkens & Liz Klaassen	Mary Markve- Patch	Chuck Klaassen	Larry Janski & Kevin Spike	

\*We are looking for volunteers for our Christmas Eve Service at 4pm. Please let Christy know if you are interested in helping. Thanks!

# Coffee Time Changes Starting in January

The Fellowship Committee is excited to announce a new initiative for our Coffee Fellowship Time! Starting in January 2025, our coffee fellowship will be served by various groups and committees within our church. This change will allow different groups to engage with the congregation and foster connections among our members. Our 16 groups and committees will take turns serving coffee and refreshments throughout the year. Each group will be responsible for hosting on their designated Sundays. If a group is unable to serve, they are responsible for finding their own replacements. If there are questions about the coffee maker or dishwasher, we are happy to help and host trainings. The specific rotation schedule will be published in upcoming newsletters and posted in the narthex so keep an eye out for when your group is serving!

Please let Christy know who would like to receive communications about this in the months ahead.

# Session Summary

### Highlights of the November 19 Stated Session Meeting

### Session approves Property Use Agreement with Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church

Elders approved a Property Use Agreement with Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church (SOJLC) that will allow their congregation to share space with us effective December 1, 2024. Under the agreement SOJLC will have exclusive use of the church on Sunday afternoon/evenings and Thursday evenings. Their office will be located in the former nursery and they will use the west coat

room area for storage. The agreement delineates other parameters for programming and building use. The agreement will be in effect until a formal lease is approved. The lease agreement first must be approved by the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Board of Trustees. Thanks to Elders Don Eddy and Chuck Klaassen who worked out the agreement with the Lutheran congregation. Let's prepare to warmly welcome our siblings in Christ.

### Janski to help with sabbatical planning

Elder Larry Janski was appointed as the Session's representative to a sabbatical planning committee. Pastor Entz plans to be on sabbatical from late April to late July next year. The committee will also include members from the Deacons, Personnel Committee, and Worship & Music Committee. They will work with the pastor to arrange coverage for worship, pastoral visitation, program planning, meeting coordination, and other functions during the three-month sabbatical.

### Reminder: Special Congregational Meeting on December 8

Members will have a chance to comment on the budget, consider the pastor's terms of call, review the adequacy of our staff's compensation, and elect at-large members to the nominating committee at a special congregational meeting on Sunday, De-

cember 8, following wor-

ship.

# Session

Meets monthly on the third Tuesday at 6:30pm

Theresa Bevilacqua Cindy Doth Don Eddy Larry Janski Ralph Johansen Chuck Klaassen Linda Shebiel Mike Quady Pastor Brian Entz

Finance Committee Fellowship Committee Personnel Committee Communications Committee Worship & Music Committee Building & Grounds Committee Missions Committee Faith Formation Committee/ Clerk of Session Moderator





To contribute to our mission and ministry online, please scan the QR code.

# Board of Deacons

Meets monthly on the third Monday at 4:30pm

Barb Janski\* Liz Klaassen Michele Lawlor Joan Lowe Lavina Pattee Kathy Quady \* Treasurer





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in which the Word, the Spirit, and the Love of God enrich and strengthen us as individuals and families in Christ.

The purpose of this Church is to fully equip us to become disciples of Jesus Christ, obeying His commandments to love and worship God, love and care for our neighbors, and make new disciples in our community and the world.

### **Buffalo Presbyterian Church**



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