



The Old Testament, we ignore it to our peril – don't tune out yet. First listen to this story about Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings 5). I haven't heard it read or told since I was in grade school. Maybe you haven't either. Maybe you've never heard it. We've used the Lectionary to make our preaching decisions for so long, and even then we ignore the less polite texts, that we've let a lot of the really good stories disappear from our memories. Political correctness and personal squeamishness has done the rest.

You see, Naaman is a man of war. Not just any man. He is commander of "the army of the king of Syria...a great man... (and) by him the LORD had given victory (over Israel) to Syria. This means that Naaman is both conqueror and enemy of Israel, God's chosen people. Problem. Naaman has leprosy. He hears that there is a prophet in Israel who can cure him. He heads off for Israel taking millions of dollars in gold and silver with him. Events send him to the prophet Elisha. Elisha tells him, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times and you ... will be clean." Simple.

Here's the beautiful part of the story. "...Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come

out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper." And the rant goes on. Well, eventually Naaman does receive a cure and all is well.

This must be an important story because Jesus quotes it (Luke 4). The people listening to him, his once upon friends and neighbors, hated it. They tried to kill him. "When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove (Jesus) out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill ... so that they could throw him down the cliff." No one likes it when God does not meet their expectations.

Not Naaman. "I thought that ... " Why in the world did he think that he knew anything at all about what God would or would not do? Not Jesus' neighbors. Why are the people listening to Jesus so infuriated that God does what God does?

We human beings do not like the fact that God is uncontrollable, that God sets limits, and even more that God is free, yes, really free. However, the Bible is full of stories just like the story of Naaman that tell us differently. We have worked through enough of the stories of the women

who were chosen by God to continue the family line of Jesus to see just how odd some of God's choices are. "I certainly would not have picked _____," - put the name of your most disliked heroine in here.

The worst of the bunch are theologians, women and men who devise systems, called appropriately, "Systematic Theologies." Each of these carefully defines what a person is to believe about God, and many other things pertaining to God. There are hundreds of these, if not thousands. Some are huge and some are tiny. Some are compared to great cathedrals and some compared to a grain of sand. All of them restrict God and our perception of God. They can be valuable. They contain the best thought of what many Christian saints throughout the ages have perceived about God. The very best warn you that they are but an attempt to explore a little further what we can only dimly come to know about God. This is what I like about Karl Barth, and the Reformed faith. We are, on our good days, honest about our limitations.

Though we all define our own beliefs about God to suit our purposes: *I want a god who allows me to do the things I like. I also want a god who will protect me and punish anybody who prohibits me my daily pleasures. Don't you?* The true God, the God

who reveals himself through the Bible, who is whom he will be, disturbs us. He heals our enemies and grants righteousness to women who, shall we say, push the boundaries of propriety. We like it when this God comes to us in a manger. We would like to keep him there, cute, and helpless. What happens is that Jesus grows up and tells stories that challenge us to our very center of being.

Let's meet this grown up Jesus, and Listen to him. It's life changing.

From Pastor Pete



- 2—Thanks/Prayers**
- 3—Session**
- 4—News from Session**
- 5—Deacons**
- 6—Deacons/Mission**
- 7—Presbyterian Women (PW)**
- 8—Soup/Choir/Recipe**
- 9—Christian Ed**
- 10—News from the Pews**
- 11—Redstone**
- 12—Happenings**
- 13—Calendar**



Thank you to our November Lectors: Deb Seighman, Tom Kimble, Barbi Findley, Cliff Dupill and Katie Ballas.

Thank you to our Advent readers: Tim, Sandy, Katie and Abbey Ballas

Thank you to our November Greeters: Edyth Elwood, Bev & Mario Tagliati, Darlene & Bob Thompson, Larry & Debbie Seighman and Sheree & John Wagner

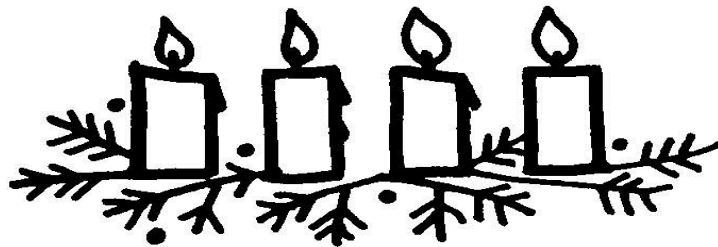


For our prayers:

Ed Bahney, Renee Bates, Renee Beck, Bill Bert, Bob Bierer, Bryan Billeck, Donna Blaser, Lil Bowman, Max Brooks, Ralph Brown, Carolyn Buckley, Anna Mae Chicka, Irene Clark, Jeffrey Clark, Lyndsey Coulter, Elvira, Lee & Linda Gardener, Melissa Goetschius, Helen Grayem, Allison Grundy, Caleb Hall, Leonard Hartman, Janine Hayle, Tiffany Jensen, Leland & Berenice Jones, Marjorie Kaiser, Clifford & Karen Lightner, Norm Linhart, Thelma McCutcheon, Irma McDivitt, Conrad McQuaide, Amy McQuaide, JoAnn Miller, June Moorhead, Steve Morcheid, Sandy Nemetz, Zachary Novickoff, Thad Overly, Wanda Petrilla, James & Winifred Powers, Rafael Rincon, Steve Roman, Lena Snedecor, Terry Wiester, Peter Yurtin, Glen Shultz, Ed & Betty Schmidt, Merle Lowman, Callie Spaulding, Kathleen, those gripped by addictions, and those who serve in the military.

Occasionally names are removed from the prayer list when the office has not been updated, if you see one removed that should remain, please contact the office.

Please keep in prayer all those who are searching for God, they may not even know it. Pray for all those who come to Poke Run for "Soup for the Soul," for our "Healing Services," for "Breakfast with Santa," for worship. Pray that Poke Run will continue to be a witness of God's love.



*Thank
You*

Ron Bowman would like to thank everyone for their calls and cards as he recuperates from knee surgery. He especially would like to thank Pastor Pete and the "Soup for the Soul" crew who carried on November's gathering.

From the approved minutes of Poke Run Presbyterian Church Session October 13, 2015

The scheduled meeting of the Session met in the Sunday School rooms @ 7:00 pm. A quorum was present.

Session Members present: Rev. Peter Goetschius -Moderator, Connie Cauvel – Clerk, Chad McCutcheon – Asst. Clerk, Tim Martin, Cindy McQuaide, Linda Moorhead, Linda Chicka, **Excused:** Bob Thompson, Meri Slaughaupt, Connor Martin

MSC: To Approve Session minutes: September 8, 2015

MSC: To accept Deacon minutes: none

MSC: To accept Trustee minutes: September 24, 2015

MSC: To approve Treasurer's report: Amy Wilkinson

Committee Reports:

Budget & Finance: Tim Martin – presented 2016 Budget from the Budget and Finance Committee.

Christian Ed - Sandy Chappell - Karen Goetschius is doing a great job with the young children. Debbie Seighman, Ruth O'Connor and Diane Scott volunteered to be substitutes.

MSC: To approve 2016 Terms of Call

Mission and Stewardship: Linda Chicka, Mary Slaughaupt - 2016 mission trip June 19 – 24. They are returning to Marion Virginia with Project Crossroads. Visited Grace Community Presbyterian Church in Lower Burrell. Adelphoi kids will help break down after Rummage Sale

Congregational Life: Connie Cauvel - Committee served refreshments after the Healing service for Cancer victims and their supporters and we are preparing to serve Chicken dinner after Congregational Meeting on October 18. We will also serve refreshments for the Healing Service for who have questions and doubt." On November 28.

Technology Committee - Looking into making entire church Wi-Fi acceptable. They plan to ask Rick Slaughaupt to help us with this. Also discussed getting volunteers to help with the soundboard on a rotating basis, to have substitutes available.

Nominating –Meri Slaughaupt & Chad McCutcheon - All the officers have been selected

MSC: To approve the Slate of officers.

Pastor Pete's report: Presbytery at Laurel Hill September 15, 2015 Healing Service – Cancer Sept. 26 Communion, October 4, Memorial Service for Skip Pfeiffer October 10. Funeral for Bob McBride.

Old Business: We will need the next phase of Clearances notarized and Chad has agreed to help with this. We should have 2 teachers / helpers during Sunday school. Staff clearances are due in January and volunteers due in July of 2016

New Business: Joint Session meeting of our Boards will be December 8. We will meet in Sunday school rooms, And each board will discuss what they have done this year and their needs and vision for the future. Menu: coffee, tea, cider and dessert Sandy will bring cider and Cindy & Linda M, will make the desserts.

MSC: Vacation for Rev. Goetschius November 1 & 8, 2015.

Close with prayer: Linda Moorhead

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved: November 10, 2015





Pastor Pete continued the series of “Healing Services,” with the purpose of drawing God’s people near, to hear the Word and lead to the understanding of God’s healing grace in all situations. In November the focus was on those who have questions and experience doubt.

It was a time of learning and sharing as those who gathered discussed “learning who God is” and how we can be a part of His desires for the world. Look forward to more of these discussions.



Next Healing Service: Saturday, January 30th - 6pm—

As we did this past January, Pastor Pete has planned a Service of Healing for Veterans.

“This service is open to all, veterans, families, friends, and all the community; everyone. We hope to touch all those who carry the wounds of war and the losses that come with them, physical, emotional, and spiritual.”

A supper will be provided following the service.

As a congregation, Poke Run is urged to get the word out to those in need. Direct people to our website, invite them personally, contact the office to offer help where needed and lift up this ministry in prayer.

See Pastor Pete for more information.



Next Sunday, December 6th will be “Ordination Sunday,”

Please plan on attending the 11am service as those who have been called to serve on the Poke Run Boards for 2016 will be ordained and commissioned.

Please continue to keep all of Poke Run’s volunteers in your prayers as Poke Run continues to “... call the people of ... surrounding communities to respond to the Good News of God’s saving love in Jesus Christ.”

ATTENTION ALL BOARDS AND COMMITTEES!

Please mark your calendar for Tuesday, December 8 at 7pm. We would like to have all the Committee and Board members gather together at this joint meeting to connect with the Session and each other to provide a brief review of your past year and look to the future. Everyone present will have an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas. It is our hope that those who have been elected to serve for 2016 will attend this meeting as well.

(Light refreshments will be served.)

Blessings,
Connie



Monday, October 5, 2015

Deacon Minutes

Opening 7:05 P.M Nikki McQuaide read a devotional



Attending: Jan Fitzgerald, Nikki McQuaide, Debora Ross, Mario Tagliati, Nancy Kimble, Carol Thompson, Tammy Kelley and Pete Goetschius.

Absent: Sheree Wagner, Diane Scott, and Logan Hileman

Secretary Report: None, no meeting in September

Treasurer Report: Balance 05-04-2015	\$1,905.17
Outgoing	261.30
Incoming	902.76 (Strawberry Festival)
Balance	\$2,546.63

Nancy Kimble report from Budget and Finance: Deacons will be funded \$2,000.00 per year by the churches general fund, this will give us more opportunity to serve the community.

Agenda:

Discussed Strawberry Festival, it was successful but need to ask for more help from the congregation. Suggestions received; getting larger plates and labeling food.

MSC Discontinuing Watkins Sale

Updating College Students addresses, will prepare boxes next meeting.

Moderator Jan F. asked if someone would consider volunteering to be the moderator for 2016.

November, Thanksgiving food baskets.

7:55 P.M. Closed in Prayer by Rev. Pete

Sunday, Dec. 13—is the deadline to order **Christmas Food Baskets**. If you know of someone who would benefit by receiving a basket, please contact a Deacon or call the Poke Run Office. You will need to provide the name and phone number of the person who will be picking up the basket.



Saturday, Dec. 19—Thanksgiving Basket pick-up. 9am.



Christmas Poinsettia The Poke Run Deacons will be taking orders for Christmas poinsettias and Foodbank Donations—Poinsettia deadline Dec. 4—Foodbank donation deadline Dec. 13. Call the office if you missed the forms.

All loose offerings on Christmas Eve will go to the work of the Poke Run Deacons.

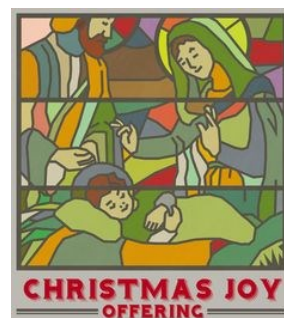


The Deacon's Giving Tree will soon be set up in the Narthex with the gifts due back to the church by Sunday, December 13th. As you begin your holiday shopping, keep an eye out for good deals and then please stop by and pick up a name or a couple of name tags to help needy families have a wonderful Christmas. (Watch for boy tags—blue and girl tags—pink.)

Where does the Christmas Joy Offering help?

Fifty percent of undesignated receipts to the Christmas Joy Offering are distributed to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs that provide support to retired and active church workers and their spouses and families. The other fifty percent supports Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges through the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Please consider giving to this Presbyterian Mission—envelopes will be available.



MISSION TRIP 2016
JUNE 19-24TH!

Poke Run members and family participated in the first annual Kiski Valley Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving morning. The "Trot" is sponsored by the Kiski Area Youth Network (KAYN). Poke Run is an active supporter of —KAYN www.KVturkeytrot.com

Pictured are Callie (Martin), Ellie, Miles and Dan Spaulding, Laurie, Connor and Tim Martin, and Jeff and Amy Wilkinson. Runners, Dan finished 2nd, Jeff 11th, Connor 22nd and Amy.....234th, - not bad Poke Run showing for a field of over 300 participants! (and yes that means there were people behind me!!!)



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN NEWS

The Quarterly PW meeting is cancelled this December.

Circle 2 will meet on Thursday, December 10 at 7pm at the home of Val Hansen.

Linda Moorhead will be the leader.

Thank Offering

The PW would like to thank everyone who participated in the "Thank Offering" in November. The generosity of our congregation is most appreciated.



Thank you too, for the many donated shoeboxes for "Operation Christmas Child."

Thank You to everyone who prayed for, contributed to or ATE at Circle 2's annual Spaghetti Dinner. Over 260 people were served in only 2 hours. This event gets bigger every year! DON'T MISS IT NEXT YEAR!!!!



Thank you to the Poke Run Trustees and their helpers who brightened our sanctuary with the cleaning of the chandeliers.

Thank you too, to everyone who came out to decorate Poke Run for the holidays.



The next "Soup for the Soul" will be Wednesday, December 9th.
(Taco Soup!!)

11:30am—doors open, Noon—"Soup's On"

Mark your calendars for the second Wednesday of the month
October through May. If you would like flyers to distribute, please
contact the Church office. Remember to invite a friend.

DESSERTS NEEDED: If you are able to volunteer a dessert or
your time, please contact the Poke Run Office.



WHAT A GREAT WAY TO REJOICE DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON!

Choir rehearsals for the Christmas Eve late service are starting. If you are
interested in joining the choir for the holiday, see a choir member or Sean. We
would be thrilled to have your talents!



And we know that there are other musical talents to share.

Let Sean know if you would like to participate with your musical
instrument.



Dish: _____

Recipe

Serves: _____

WHITE CHOCOLATE PARTY MIX

from the kitchen of Tammy Kelley

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 pkg 10oz mini pretzels | 5 Cups Cheerios |
| 5 Cups Corn Chex | 2 Cups salted peanuts |
| 1# M&M's | 1-12oz pkg vanilla chips |
| 2 T Vegetable oil | |

Combine pretzels, cereal, peanuts and M&M's. Melt chips and
oil (in microwave—2min, stirring once) Stir til smooth then pour
over mixture and mix well. Spread out on waxed paper and
spread apart. Let dry for 6-8 hours, store tightly.



WE'RE LOOKING FOR MORE RECIPES TO SHARE—SUBMIT YOURS!!!! -

Santa's Coming For Breakfast

The Christian Education Committee is sponsoring their annual "**Breakfast With Santa**" on **Saturday, December 5, from 8:30 to 11:30am.**

A great breakfast at a great price with a special picture on Santa's knee.

Tickets are available at the door. Adults and children ages 11 and over: \$5, children ages 3 to 10: \$3, and children ages 2 and under eat free!

Breakfast includes pancakes and syrup, sausages, and your choice of beverages.

Each digital photo with Santa costs only \$1.00 and is mounted for you in a specially designed card by one of Santa's elves. Picture processing takes about 30 minutes so plan to get your pictures taken with Santa prior to eating or shopping at Santa's Store. You'll find some great Christmas decorating ideas and gift giving items at this year's store.

Proceeds benefit the Christian Education Programs.

And it's not too late to volunteer. **Calling All Elves!**

Santa is in need of lots of helpers for his breakfast. If you can help him, contact Linda Chicka at lgchicka@gmail.com, or at 724-422-3688, or call the church office.

Set up/Decorating Night, Friday, December 4, beginning at 6:00pm. We start with a meal so bring a covered dish or dessert!



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday School at Poke Run Church

Classes meet each Sunday at 10am.

FOR THE KIDS Karen Goetschius leads the Children's Class, an engaging time of song and music, crafts and games, and a Bible message. Appropriate for all school aged children.

God has blessed this Sunday morning ministry with 8-10 kids attending weekly—Rejoice and Be Glad!!!!

Spread the word—bring kids—invite kids.

On Sunday, December 20th, the kids will share their Christmas "joy" during the 11am Worship service.

ADULTS We have two adult Sunday School classes. The class meeting in the West Wayside room (on the left at the end of the hall) is using the David C. Cook series titled ""Sacred Gifts and Holy Gatherings" . The class meeting in the Session Room (on the right at the end of the hall) is working through a study guide from Max Lucado's Life Lessons series. "Galatians, Free in Christ"



As reported in the November Ranger—the KA Marching Band traveled to the “Bands of America” Grand National Championship in Indianapolis IN. KA placed 2nd Place in the Class AA Division. Congratulations to Poke Run’s own **Logan Hileman and Kyle Piper.**



Jacob Slaughaupt and Jeff Wilkinson were part of this year’s history making Kiski Area Soccer team as the varsity team advanced to the WPIAL AAA semifinals, KA’s first ever appearance. KA entered the playoffs as a #14 seed and went on to knock off the #2 and #6 teams. KA finished #4 in the WPIAL AAA Division after losing in round 3 of the playoffs. Great job!

SYRIA SHRINERS YOUTH DANCE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2015
7:30 - 10:30 PM

SYRIA SHRINERS
1877 SHRINERS WAY
CHESWICK, PA



SEMI-FORMAL DRESS ▪ SHIRT & TIE, DRESS

FREE ADMISSION
INCLUDES PIZZA! POPCORN! NACHOS & CHEESE!
SOFT DRINKS!
ALL THE MUSIC YOU CAN HANDLE!!

“PLEASE BRING A FRIEND OR TWO, AND SHOW THEM HOW MUCH FUN THE MASONIC YOUTH GROUPS HAVE”!



Logan Hileman and his 6 point buck!

PHOTOS WANTED!!!!

The Office can use emailed photos from cameras or cell phones. We’d love to include more pics from church functions.



If you have appropriate News to share in the Ranger—please submit it to the office. The next Ranger deadline is December 22nd.





\$74,000 scholarship per student at Westminster College.

Pastor Nominations due:

Dec. 1

Student Applications due:

Dec 15

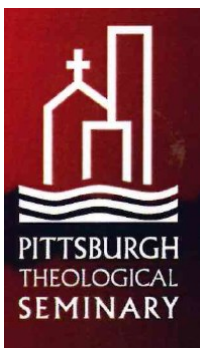
CONTACT

THE OFFICE FOR

MORE

INFORMATION.

WESTMINSTER
COLLEGE



Advent Devotional

Again this year Pittsburgh Theological Seminary will observe Advent with an online devotional. We invite you to read and listen to daily messages written by members of the Seminary community. You can access the devotions in these ways:

- » **Read online or print and share.** Visit www.pts.edu/devotional.
- » **Receive daily e-mails.** Go to www.pts.edu/email, click "Sign up for Seminary News," and "Devotionals."
- » **Follow along on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+.**
- » **Download our free Android or Apple app.** Visit the store and search for "Devotions - Advent & Lent."
- » **Request your printed copy.** Call 412-362-5610 or e-mail reception@pts.edu.

Also, our Lenten Devotional will be available in February 2016. We hope you'll follow along daily, be deepened in your faith through the words of your brothers and sisters in Christ, and prepare your heart to celebrate Christ's birth.

Stories of Redstone

Christ at work in our midst

Journey to the Holy Land in Israel/Jordan

Twenty pilgrims flew to Israel on October 18th to visit the land of the Bible. With Brian Kvasnica of Jerusalem Biblical Studies Society as their guide, they spent 11 days hiking, learning, praying, and singing through sites such as the Negev, Beersheba, and the wilderness of Zin before crossing the border into Jordan for a few days.



The Western Wall in Jerusalem

In Jordan, the group experienced Petra (some on foot, some on horseback, some on camels), the citadel in Amman, Jerash, and Mt. Nebo (to name a few.) Then it was time to cross back into Israel to visit Jericho, Jerusalem, Masada, Nazareth, Galilee, and many places in between! The group arrived home safe & sound on October 30th.

Words cannot fully describe this journey, but Rev. Niki Brodeur at First Presbyterian Church – Greensburg had this to say:

"To see what Moses saw from Mt. Nebo, to put my feet into the same river in which my Lord was baptized, to place my hand upon the Western Wall where so many have lifted prayers to God...there is nothing else that could have impacted my faith and ministry the way that this pilgrimage has done."

Poke Run members Tim, Laurie and Connor Martin as well as Poke Run friends Matt, Sue and Abby Thornton traveled with this group—they have so many interesting experiences to share.



HAPPENING IN OUR PRESBYTERY

Dec. 2—Christmas gathering, entertainment and food. 7pm Community UP Church, New Alexandria

Dec. 5&6, 12& 13—Salem Crossroads Christmas, Delmont PA—reservations required

The Poke Run Office will be closed on Dec. 24th & 25th and Dec. 31st and Jan. 1st.

The Redstone Presbytery Office will be closed on Dec. 23 through Jan. 1.

COMING UP AT POKE RUN CHURCH IN DECEMBER

Dec. 5 – Christian Ed – Annual “Santa’s Breakfast”

Dec. 6—Ordination Sunday

Dec. 8 – Joint meeting of all Poke Run Boards

Dec. 9 – “Soup for the Soul” – 11:30am.

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Service

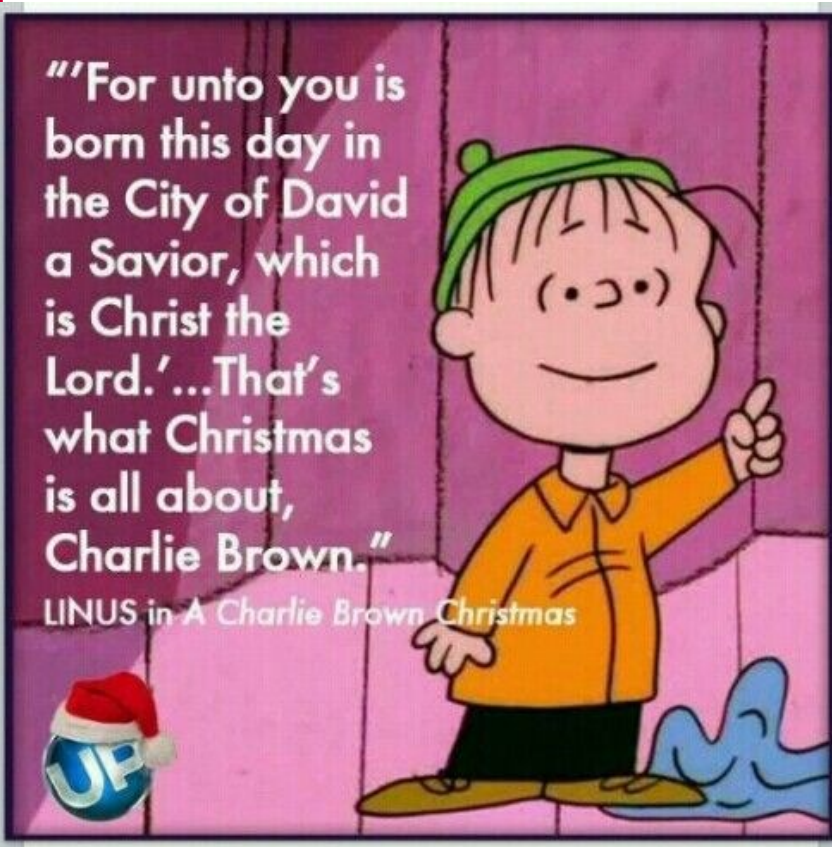
HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Overly’s Country Christmas is OPEN NOW—at the Westmoreland County Fairgrounds

Dec. 5-7 at 7pm and Dec. 8 at 2pm—“Hometown Christmas” at Vandergrift Casino Theater

Monthly on the 2nd Wednesday at the Wash. Twp. Firehall 11:30am—noon

Blood Pressure Clinic for Seniors— Bring your table service and a covered dish.



It's really not that complicated!

Bob Wilson and Linda Chicka volunteer every week to run the sanctuary sound board for the Early and Late Worship services. They would LOVE to have some help with this. If you are willing to volunteer to run the sound board every once in a while, please see one of them.







**THE JOINT MEETING OF THE SESSION, DEACONS AND TRUSTEES
WILL BE ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8 AT 7PM.**



December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 6 Advent 2nd 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	7 7pm Deacons	1 8 7pm Session JOINT MEETING	2 6:30pm Bells 7pm Choir 7pm Mission & Stewardship	3 7pm Budget & Finance	4 6pm—Breakfast set up	5 8:30-11:30 <i>Santa's Breakfast</i> 
13 Advent 3rd 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	14	15	16 6:30pm Bell Choir 7pm Choir	10 <u>Circle 2</u>	11	12
20 Advent 4th 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	21	22	23	24 5pm & 7:30pm Christmas Eve 	25 Merry Christmas	19 Deacon Food Basket Pick-up 9-AM
27 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	28	29	30 	31	<div> <p>NOTE THAT THE OFFICE OF REDSTONE PRESBYTERY & POKE RUN'S OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY ON December 24, 25 , 31 & January 1.—Call Pastor Pete in case of an emergency 724-454-2278</p> </div>	

In December:

December 5th, 8:30am to 11:30am

Breakfast with Santa

Adults & Children ages 11 years and over \$5.00

Children 3 years to 10 years \$3.00

Children 2 years and under eat Free!



December 24th Christmas Eve Candle Light Service

5:00pm Informal Worship

7:30pm Formal Worship



Poke Run Presbyterian

1091 Poke Run Church Rd.
Apollo, PA 15613



www.pokerunchurch.com