

Poke Run Presbyterian Church— “The Ranger” December 2016



The gospel writer John begins his story before Creation began, “In the beginning was the Word,” a way of saying that Jesus has existed forever as part of the Trinity. Mark begins his gospel with, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Mark jumps right in at the start of Jesus’ ministry. The other two writers of our gospels, Matthew and Luke begin with what we call “birth narratives.” They tell us of the miraculous events surrounding the birth of Jesus. The last book of the Bible, The Revelation to John, tells us that Jesus is the beginning and the end of all things. Jesus’ birth is the ending of one period of time and the beginning of another.

Many people believe that at some unknown point in history there will be what they call a “Rapture.” This is a time when a certain number of people will be taken from earth directly to heaven. Today I want to explore this idea by asking, “What would happen if the Rapture occurred on Christmas day, December 25th, 2016, at 11:00 A.M.? This question is prompted by the real facts that

attendance Sunday of the year. Ironical isn’t it that on the day that we celebrate the birth of God our Savior a majority of those who still attend church services normally do not attend?

So in the remainder of this essay I am going to consider just who might be raptured on this coming Christmas Day. The first group to think about would be “the elect.” Some have narrowed this to 144,000. This seems to me to be far too limited a number to allow for the hordes of people pictured in other portions of the heavenly scenes in the book of Revelation. Others would say that God alone knows a specific number of souls who will be saved. A few agree that there is a set number and add “possibly infinite.” Aside from the fact that this gets us into the gooey messiness of defining “infinite” this at least gives the less perfect of us a chance, a glimmer of hope so to speak. It also begs the question, “Just what are we elect for and are we doing or being just that?”

Next let’s consider the street people. It seems that Jesus had a fondness for “thieves and prostitutes” whom he claimed would get

into heaven before the highly religious men of his time. Might it be that after this Rapture the streets would be clean of the homeless and addicts and other human detritus that have long suffered outside the minds of Middle America? This seems to me to be high on the scale of probability. Remember the beggar who looked down from heaven on the rich man Lazarus who badly needed a drink of water.

Then there are those who will be faithfully attending church. These I think have nothing to fear. They understand with John that God has chosen them from eternity past. They have already entered the Kingdom proclaimed by Mark. They thrill again and again at the birth stories of Matthew and Luke, wonder with Mary, believe and obey with Joseph, leave their flocks to marvel with the shepherds, or travel great distances, perhaps through snow and ice, to once again behold the Christ Child as wise persons always have.

But what about those who choose to ignore Sunday worship and stay home. Let’s be careful here if for no other reason than that our task is to witness. It would be easy to say that clearly they have rejected God and therefore God will reject them, or leave them behind in the jargon of end time thought. But God is

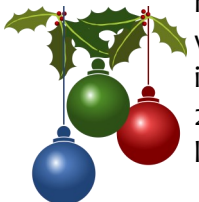
not us. Think about the parable of the woman who anointed Jesus with a jar of perfume. She loved much because she was forgiven much. Perhaps, God in His infinite mercy would also rapture those who choose the trinkets of self-indulgence over celebration of the birth of Christ. They might then love much because they have been forgiven much.

And then, “It is not God’s will that any should perish.”

From Pastor Pete



- 2—Thanks/Prayers**
- 3-4—Session/ Office**
- 5—Deacons**
- 6—Christian Education**
- 7—Presbyterian Women (PW)/ Mission/ Budget & Finance**
- 8—Redstone**
- 9—News from the Pews**
- 10—Happenings**
- 11—Calendar**



historically when Christmas is on December 25 it is the lowest

Thank you to our November Greeters:

Brian & Nancy Dombroske, Larry & Debbie Seighman, Karen Staymates, Jessica Slaughaupt, Margaret McBride and Sherry Masisak

Thank you to our November Lectors:

Heidi Hileman, Jodi Dupill, Jeff Wilkinson and Patrick Wilkinson



For our prayers:

For our prayers: Ang, Ed Bahney, Renee Bates, the family of Bill Bert, Lil Bowman, Sarah Brank, Max Brooks, Ralph Brown, Carolyn Buckley, Cailleigh Chappell, Roxy Chickar, Irene Clark, Jim Dunmire, Elvira, Elmer Foley, Lee & Linda Gardener, Marnee Gormley, Helen Grayem, Allison Grundy, Trevor Hawk, Janine Hayle, Joyce Hodges, Tiffany Jensen, Leland & Berenice Jones, Marjorie Kaiser, Pat Lengauer, Cliff Lightner, Norm Linhart, Samantha McCutcheon, Irma McDivitt, Conrad McQuaide, Amy McQuaide, JoAnn Miller, June Moorhead, Steve Morcheid, Sandy Nemetz, Thad Overly, Sarah Parrish, Winifred Powers, Julie Remaley, Rafael Rincon, Steve Roman, Ed & Betty Schmidt, Dwayne Smith, Mim Smith, Callie Spaulding, Dave Speer, Dinah Staymates, John Steele, JD Stait, Arlene Switzer, Amy Teele, Jill Tocco, Terry Wiester, Clay Wilabee, Peter Yurtin, 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. It is a privilege to lift up those we care about in continued prayer and Poke Run Church rejoices that many of those included on our "Prayer List" are healing and strengthening. If you placed names on our "Prayer List," please contact the office to update us.

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 "Breakfast with Santa," for worship. Pray that Poke Run will continue to be a witness of God's love.

Please keep the family of Poke Run's James Powers in your prayers. James passed away on Monday, October 31, 2016.

Please keep Dolly George and her family in your prayers. Dolly's father, Bill Bert passed on November 12th.



The season of Advent is here: "In Advent we expectantly wait for the One who has already come. We anticipate the promised justice of God's new world, yet we praise God who raised the "righteous branch" to rule with justice and righteousness. We hope for the restoration of the afflicted, the tormented, and the

grieving, yet we delight that healing has come in Christ. We long for the beating of swords into plowshares, yet we rejoice that the Prince of Peace has appeared. We yearn for the barren deserts of our inner cities to flourish, yet we laud the desert Rose that has bloomed. We dream of the land where lions and lambs live in harmony, yet we acclaim the child born to lead us into the promised land. Christ has come! Christ is risen! Christ will come again! In Advent, we are living between the first and the second coming of the Lord. ..— placing us between memory and hope, past and future ..."

FROM: PrebyterianMission.org

From the approved minutes of Poke Run Presbyterian Church Session

October 11, 2016 (regular meeting) and October 16, 2016 (Congregational meeting)

OCTOBER 11 - The scheduled meeting of the Session met @ 7:00 pm. A quorum was present and, Rev. Peter Goetschius, Moderator opened the meeting with prayer and devotions.

Session Members present: Rev. Peter Goetschius -Moderator, Connie Cauvel – Clerk, Chad McCutcheon – Assist. Clerk, Linda Chicka, Tim Martin, Ron Hileman Linda Moorhead, Sandy Chappell, and Meri Slaugenhaupt, **Excused:** Cindy McQuaide, Jeffrey Wilkinson

Budget & Finance: Tim Martin – 2017

Mission and Stewardship: Linda Chicka-Bill Craig met with Committee from Irwin involved with the Ramp Project. Completed 3 shifts at Food Bank

Congregational Life: Connie Cauvel- planning a dinner after congregational meeting still going through the roll.

Nominating Committee: Cindy McQuaide & Sandy Chappell presented 2017 Slate of Officers

New Business: Table motion to pledge \$5,000 to Pine Spring's Capital Campaign

MSC: To accept the 2017 budget as presented by Budget & Finance Committee

MSC: To accept the Slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee

October 16 -With a quorum present the meeting was held in the Church Sanctuary at 11:08am and opened with prayer by the Moderator Rev. Peter M. Goetschius.

MSC: To accept the docket presented

MSC: To dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting of the congregation.

Ecclesiastical business: The chairperson of the nominating committee presented the slate.

Session: Chad McCutcheon 2nd term, Tom Kimble, Nicole McQuaide, Logan Hileman – Youth Nominations from the floor were opened with no additional nominations: **MSC**

Deacon: Tammy Kelly 2nd term Mario Tagliati – 2nd term 1 year only, Cindy Brooks, Barbi Findley Nominations from the floor were opened with no additional nominations. **MSC**

The nominations for **Nominating Committee** for the year 2017 were opened with the following being nominated: Bob Fitzgerald, Linda Chicka, Amy Wilkinson, Dolly George, Nicole Goodiski **MSC**

Corporate business: The chairperson of the nominating committee presented the slate of proposed persons to the Board of **Trustees:** Ron Bowman, Brian Dombroske, Doug Ross, Corey Kelley- youth **MSC**

Nominations for Auditor: Bill Craig was nominated for the four-year term. **MSC**

The 2017 Budget was presented by Tim Martin, Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee: Tim thanked his committee with special thanks to Amy Wilkinson as treasurer. Committee is recommending no salary increase for employees. commented that Poke Run is truly a remarkable Church blessed with a very generous congregation.

MSC: To approve the Pastoral Terms of Call.

MSC: To adjourn the meeting at 11:45 pm. Rev. Goetschius closed with prayer.

Congregation was invited to enjoy a meal prepared by the Congregational Life Committee in Fellowship Hall.

Respectfully Submitted: Connie Cauvel (Clerk of Session)



Session meetings are open to all members of the church. Complete Session Minutes are available in the office for Church member review. The next Session meeting will be held at 7pm on December 13, 2016.



On Saturday, November 19th, over 100 Presbyterians of the Redstone Presbytery gathered at Poke Run for their November meeting. This gathering also marked the end of Pastor Pete's term as Moderator of Redstone Presbytery; he will continue in an advisory position for the next year while Rev. Sue Washburn serves. The day began with breakfast provided by the Congregational Life committee and other Poke Run volunteers. This was followed by worship led by Pastor Pete with communion and including music by Melissa Goetschius accompanied by Amy Wilkinson (see photo.) Thank you to everyone who contributed to this occasion. A special thank you to the Poke Run Trustees for assisting with logistics including parking.



Sunday, December 11th 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 2017 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 13 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 2017 will attend this meeting as well.

(Light refreshments will be served.)



Office Hours in December 9:30am—2:30pm most days. Call ahead to be sure Amy is there!

The office will be closed on December 23rd, 26th, 30th and January 2nd.

Please share any contact information updates with the Church Office so that you do not miss out on any information. Next Ranger Deadline: December 23rd.



DEACONS

Leading through Serving.

From the BOARD OF DEACONS MINUTES 10/3/16

Present: Diane Scott, Jan Fitzgerald, Nancy Dombroske, Nancy Kimble, Debora Ross, Bev Tagliati, Mario Tagliati, Tammy Kelley, and Ruth O'Connor Absent: Debbie Seighman, Carol Thompson, and Sheree Wagner

Ruth O'Connor opened with prayer and a devotional reading.

Minutes from 9/12/16 MSC

Treasure Report from 9/12/16 MSC

Old Business

Tammy Kelley will purchase strawberry cutters for use preparing for the Strawberry Festivals.

New Business

Our budget, and current spending, were discussed. We decided to not add any new expenses to our budget, for at least 6 months. Yearly spending estimates are as follows:

Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter food baskets-\$3000.00

Gas and Walmart cards-\$200.00

College student study/care packages (2x/yr)-?

Strawberry festival-varies

Christmas and Easter flowers for shut-ins?

Miscellaneous expenses, as needs develop-?

Yearly credit estimates are as follows: Budget line from Church-\$2000.00

Strawberry Festival-\$1000.00, Gifts-varies

Tammy Kelley is in charge of communion for Nov. 27, 2016.

Jan Fitzgerald will purchase the boxes for shipping of the college student study/ care packages.

Nancy Kimble and Carol Thompson will shop for, pack and mail the care packages.

Closing and prayer-Diane Scott

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary, Deborah Seighman

Sunday, Dec. 11—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. 17—Thanksgiving Basket pick-up. 9am.



Christmas Poinsettia The Poke Run Deacons are taking orders for Christmas poinsettias and Foodbank Donations—Poinsettia deadline Dec. 18

Call the office if you missed the forms.

The Deacon's Giving Tree can be found in the Narthex, the gifts are due back to the church by Sunday, December 11th. 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.)

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



Santa's Coming For Breakfast

The Christian Education Committee is sponsoring their annual "**Breakfast With Santa**" on **Saturday, December 3, 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!



Proceeds benefit the Christian Education Programs.

Set up/Decorating Night, Friday, December 2, beginning at 6:00pm.

We start with a meal so bring a covered dish or dessert!



Sunday School at Poke Run Church

Classes meet each Sunday at 10am.

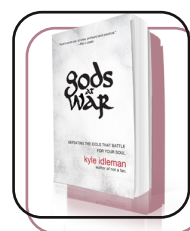
FOR THE KIDS Children's Class! – music and FUN!



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

SEEN ABOVE -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 **"The Sovereignty of God"**

SEEN BELOW The class meeting in the Session room (on the right at the end of the hall) is beginning a new study series, **"God's At War – Defeating the Idols that Battle for Your Heart"** by Kyle Idelman.



Join in the fellowship area for refreshment and conversation



Circle 2 will meet on Thursday, December 8 at 7pm at the home of Barbi Findley. Carol Thompson will be the leader. All women of the church are welcome, call the office for details and directions.



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." Poke Run contributed 23 boxes this year!



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!



MISSION TRIP 2017
JUNE 25th-30th!

The next "Soup for the Soul" will be Wednesday, December 14th.

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.



From Budget & Finance Committee by Tim Martin

Our financial situation of the Current Fund was discussed at the 2016 Congregational Meeting in October. The giving in the third quarter fell behind, and we are now running a deficit around \$19,000. We are holding the line on expenses for the rest of this year, and our budget for 2017 reflects that we are projecting that our revenues will decrease next year. We essentially are balancing our outgoing expenses to our incoming money. Our over-all financial picture including our investments is solid. We have money. Most of our investments are designated though, which precludes using them for non-designated general current expenses. The issue is that the Current Fund incoming money is not supporting our Current Fund expenses – cash flow is running behind. To finish the year at break even, Poke Run needs your financial support for the Current Fund. Please pray and give so that we can support Gods work.



Stewardship
a way of life





Stories of Redstone



"Loopin' for the Lord"



There are many churches in our presbytery that have sewing and knitting groups. Hooks and Needles meets at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Greensburg, to knit, crochet and have a time of fellowship and prayer. The group, who has members from all over the community, has been faithfully getting together for about 10 years according to the founder, Ruth Magnuson. The group started out making prayer shawls for folks going through difficult times. Over the years they have also supplied hats and scarves for Welcome Home and the Blackburn Center, as well as Acadia Church in Indiana County. They also made dresses that were sent to Africa as part of a mission project. The group also works on individual projects and are always willing to help a fellow member who may be having trouble with a project. While needle work is the common bond that brought the group together, they enjoy the fellowship just as much. As one member put it, "It is fun to get together and get to know each other at a leisurely pace." If you would like more information on Hooks and Needles please contact the church @ [724-837-3540](tel:724-837-3540).



\$76,000 scholarship per student at Westminster College.

Pastor Nominations due:

Dec. 15

Student Applications due:

Dec 15

CONTACT

THE OFFICE FOR
MORE
INFORMATION.

WESTMINSTER
COLLEGE



Dear friends,

Thanks for a very warm welcome to Poke Run. Melinda and I had fun and we feel blessed to have been invited to be part of worship. We trust that God's presence will continue to be felt in your midst.

Blessings,
Chuck

(Chuck MacPherson served as pulpit supply while Pastor Pete was away.)



Again this year, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (PTS) 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 them in these ways:

Read online or print & share via www.pts.edu/devotional

Receive Daily emails www.pts.edu/email

Follow on Facebook, Twitter or Google+

Download free Apple or Android app.

Request a printed copy: 412-362-5610 or email reception@pts.edu



NEWS FROM THE PEWS



If you have appropriate News to share in the Ranger—please submit it to the office. The next Ranger deadline is December 23rd.



PHOTOS WANTED!!!!

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



Congratulations! **Krista Gibbon**, granddaughter of **Karen Staymates** was listed in "Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities" Krista attends Saint Vincent College.



Grace Lengauer, granddaughter of **Don and Pat**, was crowned Homecoming Queen of **Avella High School** where she is a senior. She is pictured here with sisters **Bess** and **Ella**.



Last time on the field for **Greensburg Salem Senior #58 Corey Kelley**. Corey has been playing football since the age of six for **Greensburg Salem**. Corey received "All Conference Honorable Mention for Guard" for **Greensburg-Salem Football**.



Jeff, Amy, Lizzy Wilkinson and a **Thiel College** group participated with over 500 others in the second 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** **Lizzy** placed 1st in her age group, **Jeff** placed 2nd in his age group and **Amy** finished 5th in her age group (and yes there were more than 5 in her age group!). **Dan Spaulding** (husband of **Callie Martin Spaulding**) finished 2nd overall!

HAPPENING IN OUR PRESBYTERY

Dec. 2-4—Salem Crossroads Christmas, Delmont PA—reservations required

Dec. 4—Irwin Male Chorus, Sacred Music Concert 7pm New Hope Presbyterian, North Huntingdon

Dec. 11—Westmoreland County Community College Choir, 7pm Delmont Presbyterian

2nd Wednesdays of the month—"Friendship Dinner" FREE—United Presb, New Kensington

The Poke Run Office will be closed on Dec. 23rd, 26th, 30th and Jan. 2nd.

The Redstone Presbytery Office will be closed on Dec. 23 through Jan. 2.

COMING UP AT POKE RUN CHURCH IN DECEMBER

Dec. 3 – Christian Ed – Annual "Santa's Breakfast"

Dec. 11—Ordination Sunday

Dec. 13 – Joint meeting of all Poke Run Boards

Dec. 14 – "Soup for the Soul" – 11:30am.

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Service 5pm and 7:30pm

HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

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

Dec. 2-4—"Hometown Christmas" at Vandergrift Casino Theater



Poke Run's OWN—Don Lengauer will be appearing!

Singer-songwriter Cahal Dunne, has formed a choir, called ChoirPlay, based in Allison Park with 23 people so far. He refers to it as a new choral concept: pop, rock, country, Broadway and gospel songs sung to professional backing tracks. "I got through college in Ireland conducting choirs, so I'm going back to where I started." **Their first concert "Wonderful World of Christmas Show" is a benefit on Dec. 6 at St. Ursula Church Hall, Allison Park, for the church.**



"Thank you to Pastor Pete and the Poke Run Congregation for the Kind words, thoughts, prayers & cards through Dad's illness and now this most difficult time. Your support is greatly appreciated." From the Powers Family

"Poke Run Church friends, Thank you for the beautiful flowers and all of the thoughts and prayers and cards, during my dad's illness. Dolly & Ken George, the family of Bill Bert."

November Redstone Presbytery Gathering Highlights :

We were hosted graciously by the folks of Poke Run Presbyterian, Apollo with generous hospitality, inspiring music and meaningful worship. Thank you to the people of this congregation for all the details that made this gathering special.

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 JOINT MEETING OF THE SESSION, DEACONS AND TRUSTEES
WILL BE ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13 AT 7PM.



December 2016

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2 6pm— Breakfast set up	3 8:30-11:30 Santa's Breakfast
4 Advent 2nd 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School	5 7pm Deacons	6 7pm Budget & Finance	7 6:30pm Bells 7pm Choir 7pm Mission & Stewardship	8 <u>Circle 2</u>	9	10 
11 Advent 3rd 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	12 	13 7pm Session JOINT MEETING	14 11:30am "Soup for the Soul" 6:30pm Bell Choir 7pm Choir	15	16	17 Deacon Food Basket Pick-up 9-AM
18 Advent 4th 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible Study	19	20	21 6:30pm Bells 7pm Choir	22	23 OFFICE CLOSED	24 5pm & 7:30pm Christmas Eve
25 8:30 & 11 am Worship 10am Sunday School 7pm Bible	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27	28	29	30 OFFICE CLOSED	31

**NOTE THAT THE OFFICE OF REDSTONE PRESBYTERY & POKE RUN'S
OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY ON December 23, 26 , 30 &
January 2.—Call Pastor Pete in case of an emergency 724-454-2278**

Poke Run Presbyterian

1091 Poke Run Church Rd.
Apollo, PA 15613



www.pokerunchurch.com

In December:

December 3rd, 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

