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# SOUTH CHINA COMMUNITY CHURCH



Rev. Paul Harwath, Pastor

November 2017

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## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Advent is about to be with us. A time of waiting for God to answer the prayers of the world. A time to contemplate.

Christmas will come; let's not rush it. In the waiting the importance & the excitement will grow. Let's attempt to put ourselves in the world 2,000 years ago. The turmoil in the world today is significant, but the turmoil 2,000 years ago was in all places at all times.

Our world - "God's Creation" - was broken & God comes to begin the healing. We celebrate this beginning on Christmas Day. If we rush the celebration & shorten the preparation, we take away much of the feeling & most of the meaning. The Gift of our Lord Jesus is an example of God's love for all of us. This brings the gift of knowing & feeling that great love personally. This gives us the opportunity to share that love while being a part of the healing of creation. - *God's & my love to all of you, Pastor Paul*



## CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

### President's Report:

The Church Council, which consists of Glenna Jordan (Secretary & Missions & Benevolence Chair), Cheryl Baker (Worship Chair), Debbie Stowe (Communications & Outreach Chair), John Glowa (Finance Chair), Ron Maxwell (Vice President & Buildings & Maintenance Chair),

myself (President & Christian Education Chair), & Pastor Paul have been meeting regularly the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month to discuss the operations of the church, its finances, & ways we can help the church & the community. If you have any comments, ideas, or suggestions, please call or text me at (207) 458-0283 & we may either schedule you to come to a meeting or add your item onto the agenda. E-mail is a 2<sup>nd</sup> option, but I get so many throughout the day that I often cannot check my personal e-mails but once a week when school is in session.

We've continued to see some new folks & are saddened at the loss of others. This summer we sent out flyers to community members & I'm tracking our Sunday attendance (tallies are included in the meeting minutes that Glenna posts on the Council bulletin board). During the summer, numbers fluctuate as some members are away on vacation & our summer residents attend services, but we have had new visitors & hope more will come by to "check us out" & see what a loving, caring church family we are.



This year's fundraising events have gone very well, but they do not offset the decrease in tithes, pledges & loose offerings. We held our last Turkey Pie Supper for the year; they will resume in the spring. Donations from our Silent Auctions & crafters are always welcome, but we don't need to wait until spring to start creating. Together with Jesus Christ we can succeed. Thank you to everyone who shares their gifts. God did not give us gifts to bury in the sand, but to share with those around us. - *In Christian Love, Paula Kimball-Vigue, President*



## **Missions & Benevolence:**

Since the August newsletter was not published, I have included that information in this report. [Editor's Note: In case of future problems with copying or mailing our newsletters, please remember they're posted on the church web site]. We have had a couple of suggestions of folks possibly needing assistance, but further investigation found that their needs were currently being met.

The Benevolence Committee decided to again assist our two families with money for school clothes/supplies. A special Thank You to those who responded to our request for donations to supplement our funds. Store checks were given to both families, who were most appreciative.



**Feeding the Community**

Since expiration dates were nearing, Family #2 gratefully took the food in our emergency supply. This left us without goods when Pastor Paul received a September request for assistance. The local food pantry was not open, so we issued a plea to the

congregation to refill our emergency container & it was promptly filled the next Sunday! Thanks to all who answered this plea.

Just another reminder to please support PDF (Pastor's Discretionary Fund) offerings in months that have a 5th Sunday (Dec. 31st) as this enables Pastor Paul to meet the smaller emergency requests he receives from caseworkers without having to ask for special donations. He also uses his Salvation Army funds to meet requests, such as from the single Mom who needed help with rent & another to license her car.

Thanks to Pastor Paul who provided personal labor to assist an elderly lady in Albion by repairing her wheelchair & couch. He probably has done other good deeds we don't know about!

Another reminder that Lois Rogers, who is a member of the Benevolence Committee & also volunteers at the China Food Pantry, will call

our attention to immediate needs the Pantry might have; your willingness to donate to this Community Outreach is appreciated. The Benevolence Fund has again donated \$100 to assist with Thanksgiving Baskets it provides to local families.

Since Advent is fast approaching, I am including Christmas giving in this report. We have received & posted the Wish List from the Homeless Shelters in Memorial Hall; a container is available to receive your contributions, which will be delivered to the Augusta & Waterville Shelters before Christmas. We will also help our two families with Christmas gifts, as well as any special requests Pastor Paul receives through caseworkers.



**Family #1.** A 17yr old (turns 18 in Jan.) male High School Senior:

- \*Sweat pants/shirts/sweaters (Men's Large)
- \*Blue or white dress shirts (Men's Large)
- \*Black socks (Men's Size 10-12)
- \*Gift cards

**Family #2.** I learned from the mother that they've recently moved to East Vassalboro & will go to the food pantry there. She would appreciate our help this year with Christmas for the 2 boys, but said they've reached the age where they want to pick out their own clothes, so she preferred gift cards to Wal-Mart for them. (Incidentally, the boys are not fond of sweets, so candy is not a good idea!)

**For the 16 yr old boy:**

- \*Gift cards (Wal-Mart)
- \*Board games

**For the 14 yr old boy:**

- \*Gift cards (Wal-Mart)
- \*Board games
- \*Outdoor-type books

**For Mom:**

- \*Gift cards (Hannaford or Wal-Mart)
- \*Towels, face cloths, dish towels

Thanks again for your sharing & caring & "God Bless." - *Glenna Jordan, Deacon/ Benevolence Chair*

## **Building & Grounds:**



Transition from summer to winter has been more interesting this year with the wind storms. Thankfully, the building has been spared damage. There are wires in our yard from the cable/phone lines that should be taken care of shortly, but we will remove them ourselves if they are still down in the spring. Last minute maintenance is being finished to prepare for winter: with all the leaves finally down, they can be raked up along with sticks and such.

One of the maples in front of the church is dying & must be removed to ensure the survival & continued health of the other. I have watched it for years & waited as long as possible to remove it; I've arranged for the wood to be used by our neighbor who heats with wood, so it will be a simple matter of carefully bringing it down. Trimming the dead half of the tree will only postpone the inevitable & will result in a half tree stunting the growth of the living one. Removing the one is the way to have a vibrant tree in the front of the building.

Next spring there will be a work day to replace the tree we lost to the windstorms. On that day, we will also touch up paint & pressure wash all the wasp nests & trim the bushes in front of the building. - *Ron Maxwell, Chair*



## **Christian Education:**

Sunday school for both adults & children began again the Sunday after Labor Day. Pastor Paul leads the adults & I try to guide the children, with the help of Lydia Biswell. I'm so thankful & blessed to have her! The Sunday school rooms were changed a bit & one room is no longer used; we will continue to use the two connected rooms. Some organizational units have been donated to help clean up the clutter.

As far as teachings, we will be pulling from many sources, but plan to keep it aligned with the seasons & the scriptures being read during services. We will also continue to look at the Ten Commandments, with our goal being the children learning some of the scriptures through readings, songs, & other activities. If we have enough children attend on a regular basis, a play or puppet show would be included as well.

We are currently looking at performing the story of Joseph & The Coat of Many Colors. If anyone would like to help, it would be greatly appreciated. We need to have puppets made, scenery, etc. If you have any felt, cloth, thin rope, a glue gun & glue sticks, etc. that could be used for making the puppets, that would be welcomed as well.



Childcare also resumed the same day as Sunday school. We have some people on the rotation, but could really use some more. If you'd be willing to take the children down to play after the children's message, please contact me. Even if it is just for one Sunday, it would be appreciated. I made the schedule for September 2017 through August 2018 & have distributed them; a set is posted on the Council board. Any date that you are willing to cover would be fine. I am sure the scheduled person would love the break!

Bible Study/book reading groups should be starting up once again as well. Pastor Paul leads a men's group & Emily Schroeder has hosted a women's group in the past. If you are interested in participating in either of these, please see myself, Pastor Paul, or Emily. Deuteronomy 11:19 "You shall teach them to your sons..." - *In Christian Love, Paula Kimball-Vigue, Elder of Christian Education*



**Communications & Outreach:**

We've had a busy summer! The church flyers have been mailed to everyone in China. I want to express my thanks to everyone who helped on this project.

The crafters of the church met monthly in preparation for the October fair. We made over \$700 – thanks to everyone for pitching in!

I believe we've done well on the silent auction items at our church suppers. Thank you very much to all of the church members who have donated items. That is the great thing about our church: everyone seems to pitch in wherever they can help. In working together, we seem to get things done.

I'm looking for a few folks who would like to help create a fundraising group for SCCC. Many minds & hands should be able to get creative in ideas for ways to raise money for the church & have fun doing it. - *Yours in Christ, Debbie Stowe, Chair*



**Worship Committee:**



The Season of Advent is upon us & we start the new church year December 3. We will be singing favorite & much-loved Christmas carols during this season & will continue to occasionally have "member's pick" for our middle hymn throughout the year. Several

people have told me how much they enjoy this. So be thinking about what you would like to hear! You will have a chance to make your request.

This church year is "Year B" in the Revised Common Lectionary; Gospel readings will be centered mainly on the Gospel of Mark. For any of you who would like to read & consider the passages before the service, many web

sites are available that list the readings (just search on "revised common lectionary"). The site I use when I print the calendar for our Committee is [lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu](http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu). Keep in mind that Pastor Paul always has the option to make changes, as God leads him.

We have been so fortunate over the past few years to have Ian substitute in Chris's absence. I am sure there will be occasions when he is able to substitute when he is home on vacations, but we do need to look at options for Sundays when we need a substitute & Ian is away. Who out there plays the keyboard or piano? Anyone willing to help out? Suggestions? Please let me know. - *In Christian Love, Cheryl Baker, Elder of Worship*



**Finance & Stewardship:**

As this is written, the church's 2018 budget is being developed. Our 2017 budget shows that our fundraising efforts exceeded expectations, while our loose offerings have fallen far short & our total offerings will finish the year at about 91% of the budgeted amount.

On the expense side, our fixed costs for salaries & benefits total nearly 80% of our total costs. On the revenue side, our offerings continue to decline & will likely continue to do so unless & until we grow our congregation.

As of early November, our guaranteed fixed annuities have generated more than \$1,100 in interest since they were purchased in April, 2017 & now total nearly \$83,000; the total balance in all accounts is \$93,658.

In the coming year, we will be looking at cutting expenses where we can & we will need your help to increase our fundraising efforts to compensate for declining offerings. Together we will make it happen. Thank you all for your hard work & tremendous generosity! – *Respectfully, Finance Chair, John Glowa*



[WWW.GUIDEPOSTS.ORG/FALLPRAYERS](http://WWW.GUIDEPOSTS.ORG/FALLPRAYERS) for prayers of thanksgiving this season

[WWW.GUIDEPOSTS.ORG/FALLPLEASURES](http://WWW.GUIDEPOSTS.ORG/FALLPLEASURES) for photos celebrating fall's changing colors

[WWW.GOOD-SAM/COM/GUIDEPOSTS](http://WWW.GOOD-SAM/COM/GUIDEPOSTS) for tips to age actively, prevent loneliness & live life to the fullest

[WWW.GUIDEPOSTS.ORG/KSTOBBE](http://WWW.GUIDEPOSTS.ORG/KSTOBBE) for simple ways to connect with someone in your life who suffers from dementia, including tips on starting & sustaining conversation

[WWW.GUIDEPOSTS.ORG/CRAIGFRED](http://WWW.GUIDEPOSTS.ORG/CRAIGFRED)

"There was something about Maine," says Craig Grossi about his soon-to-be new home. Craig's first visits to the state were on the way to & from Afghanistan. "The people from the surrounding area come to Bangor International Airport to spend time with the troops. Some have never missed a flight," Craig says. He & his dog, Fred, spent last winter here. "Fred was like a puppy again & we were both the happiest we've ever been." See the November 2017 issue of Guideposts for the story. Grossi has also written a book about his service as a Marine, the stray dog he met on the battlefield & how they saved each other.



**SYMPATHY & CONTINUED PRAYERS** for the families & friends of those who have passed into God's hands:

George Kelley (6/20/17)  
Steve Glowa (7/26/17)  
Don Nichols (7/29/17)



- † ADULT BIBLE STUDY & SUNDAY SCHOOL, 9AM
- † CHURCH SERVICE, 10AM
- † COMMUNION: DEC 3 - JAN 7 - FEB 4
- † MEN'S STUDY GROUP: 6:30PM, 2<sup>ND</sup> & 4<sup>TH</sup>  
TUESDAYS: NOV 28 - DEC 12 & 26 - JAN 9 & 23 - FEB 13 & 27
- † CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS: 6:30PM, 2<sup>ND</sup>  
WEDNESDAY: DEC 13 (NOTE TIME CHANGE OF 6PM, AS MEETING WILL INCLUDE BY-LAWS & FINAL BUDGET REVIEW) - JAN 10 - FEB 14
- † NOV 22: THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE, 6PM
- † DEC 2: HANGING OF THE GREENS (DECORATE THE SANCTUARY & MEMORIAL HALL), 9AM
- † DEC 3: ADVENT I  
DEC 10: ADVENT II  
DEC 17: ADVENT III  
DEC 24: ADVENT IV
- † DEC 15: DOWNEAST BRASS CHRISTMAS CONCERT, 7PM (SEE PAGE 6 FOR DETAILS)
- † DEC 24: CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, 7PM
- † DEC 25: CHRISTMAS MORNING SERVICE, 10AM
- † DEC 30: "UN-HANGING" OF THE GREENS, 9AM
- † DEC 31, 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY: PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND DONATIONS (PDF SUNDAY)
- † **NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: FEB 18, 2018**

# **Christmas Joy!** **...with Downeast Brass**

**7PM, Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

**In Memory of Carl Schroeder  
Donations Accepted at the Door  
For the Church's Music Fund**



## **On the Lighter Side:** (From Reader's Digest)



Business magazine *Inc.* discovered that the following company-wide e-mails from executives only ticked off their employees:

### Subject: System Failures

It has come to my attention that the e-mail system was down yesterday. From now on, I have requested that the system manager send a group message to everyone next time the system goes down.

### Subject: Computer Course

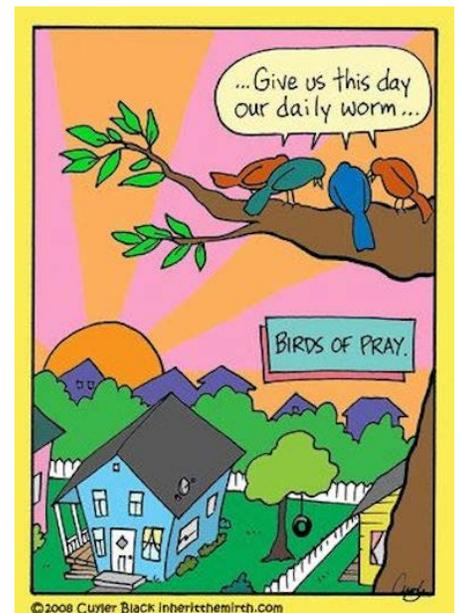
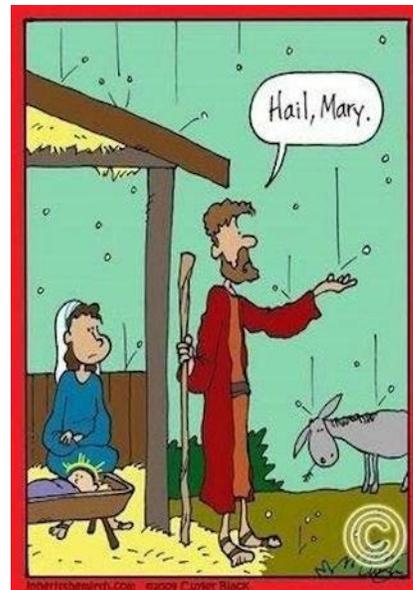
After much consideration, we have decided to cancel the training for our new computer system on the grounds that once people learn the system, they usually leave.

### Subject: Company Picnic

We will have our first company picnic next week, which we have dubbed "Morale Builder." The picnic will feature carnival rides and all-you-can-eat hot dogs and beans. A menu of steak and lobster is available for executives.

### Subject: Recognizing Employee Contributions

After several strong sales months, we have decided to print Employee Appreciation T-shirts! These shirts will go on sale next Monday.



## The Meaning of the Advent Wreath ~

(From Living Hope Church web site)

Advent, from the Latin word *adventus* meaning arrival, is the 4-week period prior to Christmas. It is a time to ponder the great sacrifice that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, made for us by coming to earth as an infant. He lived a perfect life, died a sacrificial death, and rose from the dead for us. He saved us from our sins and eternal damnation because of his great love, and adopts each person individually into his family through baptism and faith in him.

Traditionally, the Advent wreath symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent. It is typically a circular candle holder that holds five candles. During the season of Advent, one candle on the wreath is lit each Sunday until all of the candles, including the fifth candle, are lit on Christmas Day. Each candle customarily represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Most Advent wreaths use three colors of candles – purple, pink, and white. However, some may use blue in place of the purple.

### 1st CANDLE (purple)

#### **Prophecy Candle or Candle of Hope**

We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. Our hope comes from God!

### 2nd CANDLE (purple)

#### **Bethlehem Candle or Candle of Preparation**

God kept his promise of a Savior who would be born in Bethlehem. Preparation means to “get ready”. Help us to be ready to welcome you, O God!

### 3rd CANDLE (pink)

#### **Shepherd Candle or Candle of Joy**

The shepherds received a message of joy!

### 4th CANDLE (purple)

#### **Angel Candle or Candle of Love**

The angels announced the good news of a Savior!

God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because he loves us!

### 5th CANDLE (white)

#### **Christ Candle**

The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins. His birth was for his death, his death was for our birth!



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*“In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” - John 1:4-5*

