

**THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF LAMBERTVILLE  
First Presbyterian Church**

**Many voices with one faith, one heart.  
One family under God.**

**From Our Elder ~ Heather McIntyre**

**The Greatest Love Story**

It's almost Valentine's Day and love is in the air!

Who doesn't love a great love story?

Hallmark makes love into big business, stretching the market for big city and small town romances further each year.

Which is the greatest love story? Romeo and Juliet? Something more modern? Pretty Woman? Casablanca? The Notebook?

While all of these stories have made an impact on pop culture and society, none of them are the greatest love story of all time.

The greatest love story takes place sometime between Christmas and Easter. It begins back in Genesis, with God's promise to send a Savior. It takes place sometime between the birth of baby Jesus in the humble stable, fulfilling God's promise to send his own son, born in human flesh, of a young peasant woman. He sent Jesus with the purpose of sharing the gospel, caring for his flock, spreading God's message and ultimately dying on the cross to save us.

Jesus cared for the poor and healed the sick. He performed miracles. He turned water into wine. He raised people from the dead. He let the blind see. He fed the masses with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. He calmed the storm. Jesus's years on earth were filled with miracles. Although many of these miracles are specifically recorded in the Bible, we learn in John 21:25 that if all of the miracles Jesus performed were written down, the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. Take a minute to let that sink in. The many miracles that we equate with Jesus, don't even scratch the surface of his life here on earth.

Jesus taught us to forgive. He forgives us all. He even forgave those who crucified him.

He has a starring role in the bible being mentioned over 900 times in the New Testament alone. And what makes this all even more significant? Other than his birth and one mention in Luke of his boyhood, we know very little of the first 30 years of Jesus's life.

*From Our Elder Cont...*

His many miracles and the rest of his ministry took place in a little over 3 years. Nearly all of the many mentions of Jesus took place in that short period.

We can all agree that Jesus was amazing, but how does this make up the greatest love story?

During Jesus's public period, he was famous. He may not have been a celebrity by today's standards but he was known far and wide, especially as the talk of his miracles spread. He did face his share of challenges, but his fame was wide spread. Jesus was human. We know this because God told us but also because of passages like "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak", referencing the apostles but also himself). Jesus could have easily taken the easy way out. He could have fought his destiny and his inevitable cruel death. He could have run from the fame, denounced his purpose here on earth and lived out his days in a little fishing village on the coast somewhere far from Jerusalem... Or he could have pleaded with his Father. Surely there was another way, someone else who could carry the burden. Surely his Father would take mercy on him as he does on all of us...

And I'm sure the thought was tempting. He knew what was to come. His death would be public. He would be mocked. He would be forced to wear a crown of thorns. He would be forced to carry his cross through streets. He was interrogated. He was betrayed. He was physically beaten. He endured physical and emotional pain that could break some of the strongest soldiers. But Jesus did not break.

The Romans mocked him on the cross and told him to call out to his angels to save him. To be clear, Jesus was in control. He could have ended his torture at any point. He spoke seven times from the cross, praying and showing his absolute humanity in his suffering. He could have given up at any point. He could have asked God for mercy. Instead he suffered for 6 hours on the cross.

What kept him going during all of his suffering? **YOU**. You were on his mind. He died for you. He loved you more than you will ever love anyone. Despite all of your imperfections, your sins and your darkest secrets. He knew every detail and he loved you enough to die for you. His suffering was for you.

If that isn't the greatest love story of all time, I don't know what is....

## “From the Office”

Thank you for submitting your information for the Annual Reports. The Annual Congregational Meeting is on Sunday February 25th after the Worship Service. All members are encouraged to stay for the meeting—we’ll need a quorum, this is our yearly requirement for our Presbytery. Rev. Brad Morgan is our meeting Moderator. Please continue to send in your information for the Newsletters by the 20th of each month.

Thank you to all who decorated the church for Christmas, it was beautiful!

Our First Sunday of Lent is February 18th.

The Bell Choir will be getting together again on Thursday February 22nd at 7:00 pm.

Happy February to all, and stay warm!  
Sue



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## Church News:



Communion will be on Sunday February 4th, and Pastor Peter Gregory will be here. It is also Boy Scout Sunday, and the Boy Scouts and their Leaders will be here worshipping with us.

Roller Skating is happening on Fridays at 6:00 pm during the month of February. This also includes Friday Feb. 16th—as school will be in session.

The Soup Sales will be on Saturdays in February during the basketball games. The dates for the Soup Sales— 2/3 and 2/17.

Riverside Symphonia will be in the Sanctuary on 2/9 and 2/10. Their concert is on 2/10 at 8:00 pm.

The Strove Pancake Supper is Tuesday February 13th at 5:30 pm at Stockton Presbyterian Church. Ash Wednesday is on February 14th. There will be a service here at First Presbyterian, Lambertville at 7:00 pm. Pastor Peter Gregory will be leading the service. More information to follow regarding the future Lenten Services.

The Sermon and Accompanist Schedules are listed in the bulletin.

## Ministry and Outreach:

### News From Your Missions Team~

Please see the Bulletin Board in the back of the Sanctuary.

#### Your Missions Team:

Addie Andino, Gail Armitage, Konni Sandford, Russ Topping and Donna Zambella

### Greetings from your Deacons~

Happy New Year to you!!

With our love,

Gail Armitage, Jen Chernoski, Heidi Danberry,  
LaNelle Gallagher, Terry Peck and Heather Pursell.

### Thank You!

We would like to thank you so much for your support for our recent mission trip to the Dominican Republic, especially for your funding and suitcase items. You have touched the lives of many and showed that other people care for them. God Bless!

#### Your DR Mission Team:

Pat, Terry, LaNelle, Carin, Dillon, Bo, Crystal and Coocie.



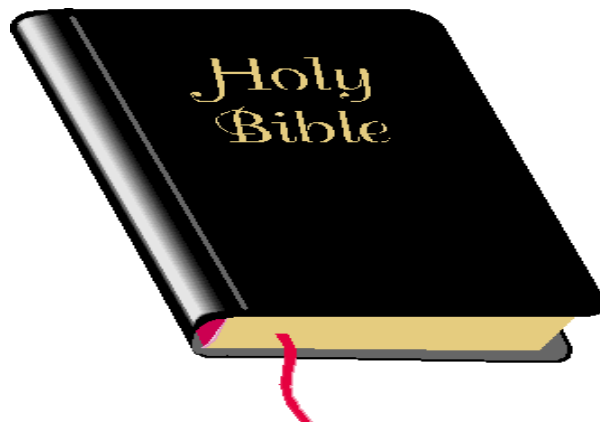
### 2024 Is Upon Us

- With each year comes new opportunities to grow in our faith, our Christian walk and our positive outlooks.
- We know the ending to this story and adventure we call life. As believers in Jesus, it is a glorious step into eternity.
- Let us strive daily to shine for Christ and also pray for others to be reconciled to God because of what Jesus has done for them on the cross.

### Women's Bible Study

Continues to meet on Wednesdays at 2:00 pm in the Church Library.  
Hope to see you there!

Blessings,  
Joanne DiBlasi



**February Birthdays**

**1 Josh Serlenga**

**3 Julia Armano**

**4 John Zambella**

**9 Marianne Clark**

**9 Peter Gregory**

**23 Joanne Dorrow**

**26 Joel Thatcher**



Just for Kids... First Day of Lent -February 18

first day of lent:

# Lent



Do something **NICE** for a teacher or pastor.

Make a cross with things you find in nature. **two**

Read a Bible story or book. **3**



Play your favorite game with someone. **four**

**four**

**5** Give someone a hug.



**NO** sweets today!

**7** Learn an Easter song.



**8** Make a cottonball lamb & think about how Jesus is the Lamb of God.



**9** Give away something to someone.



**six** Help someone today. **ten**

Draw or decorate colorful Easter eggs. **11**



Surprise someone with a **SPECIAL NOTE.**



**13** Draw a picture with chalk outside.



**14** Pray for someone.



**GIVE SOMEONE A COMPLIMENT.** **15**

**16** Help with yardwork or pick up a piece of litter.



**seventeen** Share a meal with someone.

Perform a random act of **KINDNESS.** **18**

Download Easter coloring pages, print and color. **19**



**twenty** Tell God what you are thankful for.

**LIST** reasons why you love Easter. **twenty one**



**22** Draw or purchase an Easter Lily for a friend.

**twenty three** Read John 13:1-17 and wash someone's feet.

Have a palm parade around your home. **twenty four**

**FORGIVE** someone for something they did to you. **25**



**25** Draw an Easter picture for your family. **29**

**twenty six** Talk to someone or think about why we celebrate Easter.

**27** Read about Good Friday. (John 19:16-37)

Go on a nature scavenger hunt & find things that remind you of Jesus. **28**



**31** Make something for someone. **thirty**

**thirty** Make something for someone.



Go on a walk or bike ride & pray for your neighbors. **31**

Collect items in a basket that remind you of Easter. **32**



**thirty three** Play a game in the dark with flashlights. **37**

Make an Easter card. **37**

**34** Tell someone why you love Jesus. **thirty eight**

**thirty eight** Hold the door open for someone.



**35** Play stack the Peeps. (See who can stack the most Peeps in a minute.) **39**

Read about Jesus' resurrection. (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20)



Attend an Easter service.



## **February Assisting Schedules:**

### **Elder Schedule**

Feb. 4-**Communion**/Karen Thatcher  
Feb. 11- Pat Durborow  
Feb. 18- Joanne DiBlasi  
Feb. 25- Don Pidcock

### **Deacon Schedule**

Feb. 4-**Communion**/\*Heidi Danberry (**Stair Glide**), Terry Peck  
Feb. 11- Heather Pursell  
Feb. 18- Gail Armitage  
Feb. 25- LaNelle Gallagher

### **Greeting Schedule**

Feb. 4- Boy Scouts  
Feb. 11- Joan Yannarella  
Feb. 18- Gail Armitage  
Feb. 25- Carol Griffiths

**If you unable to serve your scheduled dates,  
please find a replacement and contact the church office.**

**Schedules are subject to change**

**Thank you!**



Session Minutes  
First Presbyterian Church of Lambertville  
Adult Sunday School Room and via Zoom.

Joint Meeting of Session and Deacons

November 27, 2023 6:30 PM

Class of 2024

Don Pidcock

Karen Thatcher

Class of 2025

Joanne DiBlasi

Heather McIntyre

Class of 2026

Pat Durborow

Phil McCloughan

Pastor Brad Morgan, Moderator

Susan McCloughan, Clerk of Session

**Elders Present:** Joanne DiBlasi, Pat Durborow, Phil McCloughan, Heather McIntyre, Don Pidcock, Karen Thatcher and Pastor Brad Morgan

**Deacons Present:** Gail Armitage, Jen Chernoski, Heidi Danberry, LaNelle Gallagher, and Heather Pursell.

**Excused:** Deacon Terry Peck

**Guest:** Pastor Mike Atzert COM the Highlands Presbytery

**Welcome:** Pastor Morgan, declaring a quorum, welcomed all to the November Joint Session/Deacon Meeting and opened in prayer.

**6:30 pm Devotion- Pastor Brad Morgan/Start of Joint Meeting**

Abraham Kuyper was a scholar. He was a prolific writer not just a writer a politician concerned with the state of his country, and not just politician that started new political party, but also became one of the few to be title Pime Minister of the Netherlands. Statues were made in his honor and Kuyper College, a Christian college in Michigan, was named after his deeds. Kuyper's hope was to bring the country back to a time of moral uprightness.

He was a President, he was a Doctor, he was a Reverend, and he wouldn't have had it all save for one church lady that changed his life.

Though he was home schooled Kuyper advanced to the title of Doctor in 1862, but at that time became disillusioned with ministry and the call to the Pastorate. Though his sermons and messages were engaging, there was no passion, no life to his teaching, and within that first year he frequently thought of doing something anything else, that is until he met, Pietje Baltus, a church woman that spoke up to the pastor.

He met her for just a pastoral visit, and they spoke for a few hours, well Pietje did most of the talking, speaking to him about Christ and the Bible. The next day he visited her again, and they spoke again of Bible instead of academic teaching, Kuyper was enraptured, primarily because she showed something he never saw in his doctoral studies, passion for God's word.

At the very least, through Kuyper's own admission we at least know Pietje's name and her story, we know even less of the woman that set the path before the Commander IN Chief Namaan, second to only the King of Aram in all of his titles. But what we do know is this:

She was captured by a raiding party. She did not come into Namaan's house of her own accord, rather she was forcibly taken away from her own house. She could have been bitter and despondent. She could have hated her literal enemy, the man that housed her. Except there must have been some faith she had in not in Namaan but in God to protect her, even behind enemy lines. What faith indeed!

She had compassion. She could have minded her own business and left Namaan to his own devices. As it was with Miriam Moses's sister and her leprosy and the social context of this time, Leprosy was thought to be a scourge from God. A sin that people had to endure because of their waywardness. She didn't have to give any thought to this man, save that she wanted to. She had compassion.

With that faith and compassion comes bold courage. For faith can be a personal matter relegated only to ones private affairs, and compassion can be only a superficial concern and with it a surface level "How do you do?", but when both are presented together, it becomes a power that can move mountains and bend ears. A small slave girl spoke above her station and risked punishment at the lightest sentence humiliation and at the harshest even the pain of death. What if she was wrong, what if the healer was a fraud? Her faith and her compassion both allowed her to speak her part, and her courage gave her the means to do it.

And in the bible lastly, she had no name. Probably no possessions, she was a servant a slave after all. And yet this person gave direction for a whole Kingdom to witness the glory of God in the highest.

IN the history books, if you place all of us in this room next to commander's in chiefs, next to conquerors and CEO's, if you place us next to Presidents and Prime Ministers, well we may not have much of a byline if at all. We may be unnamed in those places, and who knows maybe that's a good thing, perhaps it gives us more latitude to do God's work instead of coopting and believing it is our work, and will not God's will be done.

I especially think of this time, this Christmas season, where God, thousands of years ago, became a small unnamed boy in an particularly backwater unnamed town instead of becoming Commander in Chief or Prime Minister, Ceaser or King, his rightful title, so that he could as it says in Philippians 2, became the nature of a servant, and humbled himself in the form of a servant, obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

Friends, because of a servant of the Lord whose name many don't recognize, Pietje, the Dutch Kingdom was turned to the Lord. Friends because of a servant of the Lord whose name isn't recorded the Kingdom of Aram was turned to the Lord. Friends because of The Servant who is The Lord, whose name was vilified a new Kingdom was Formed, and is Eternal.

I hope and pray we too can serve, deacons or in the Greek diakonos, means servant after all, we can serve with faith, compassion, and courage, just as these three prime examples of God's kingdom.

**Deacon Update:** Jen talked about what the Deacons have been up to, and she read from the Deacon Mid-Year Summary-Treasurer's Report. The highlights were: Flowers, Care Packages, Cards, Local Families in Need, Church Supplies, Memorial Donations, Bibles, Pastor Pete, the Shad Festival, and the trip to the Dominican Republic. The Session thanked the Deacons for what they do for our church and the set-up for the monthly communion. The Junior Deacons were talked about at this time, and how much more they are assisting during the worship services. Hopefully for next year the Junior Deacons will help out for the Shad Fest. It was asked if Pastor Pete was going to be here for Shad Fest next year, but LaNelle mentioned that he may be moving south, so it isn't known if he would be available. More information to follow. More Children's Bibles may be needed for skating, Sue will order if needed.

**Discussion of Mission Funding:** This was discussed. Don talked about how the Dominican Republic is being taken care of, but on the other side of the country, Haiti is the place that needs help, especially the children. Children are coming into the DR from Haiti, but they are only allowed to stay until 6<sup>th</sup> grade, then they need paperwork to remain in the DR. Pat mentions that there is a language barrier especially from the children coming in from Haiti.

### Calendar Highlights from December 2023 -February 2024:

We are in the Advent season. We will have 4 readings/lighting of the Advent Candles starting on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and a reader to light the Christ Candle for Christmas Eve. The ISI Banquet is being held on Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Riverside Symphonia is in our Sanctuary on Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10, with their holiday concert on the 10<sup>th</sup>. The Lambertville Elks will be in the gym on Saturday Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> for their annual Hoop Shoot in the afternoon. On Monday December 11<sup>th</sup> there will be a Women's Christmas Gathering at 6:30 pm in the Church Library and Crystal Robertson will be the Guest Speaker. The Children's Christmas Pageant is on 12/17 during the worship service. On Sunday 12/24-Christmas Eve we will be having 2 services. One at 10:30 am, which will be Lessons and Carols, and the 4:00 pm Candlelight Service and will be led by Elder Phil McCloughan. Skating will be taking a break on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, and will resume on 1/6/24. As per Pat, there is no Friday Night Hang for grades 7-12 at this time, it is in the process of being revamped. If any adult would like to help out with the teen hang night to please call the Church Office. The Sermon and Accompanist schedule will be continued to be posted in the bulletins. Jen will send Sue an email to remind her to send out a message to the congregation for Communion Sundays for a non-perishable food item for Peter's Pantry. Joanne will speak to Bob Holland regarding the sermon for 12/17. Pastor Gregory will be here for Communion on 12/10/23, 1/7 & 2/4/24. The Soup Sale fundraisers are scheduled to start in January during the basketball games here at our gym. Riverside Symphonia will be having another concert on 2/10/24. They will be in the Sanctuary on 2/9 as well. March 2024 Sermon Schedule is full, per Joanne D. The Women's Bible afternoon Bible Study will be continuing.

**The Annual Report and Congregational Meeting-** The reports are due to the Church Office by the middle of January. The Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Sunday February 25, 2024, after the worship service. Pastor Brad will be available to moderate the meeting.

**Ash Wednesday is February 14, 2024. The First Sunday of Lent is February 18<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Nominating Committee for 2024- This year's Nominating Committee:**

Carol Griffiths, Danielle Griffiths, and Heather Pursell. Karen Thatcher is the Elder Representative and Gail Armitage is the Deacon Representative.

**Other Joint Matters for Discussion:** Sight and Sound for 2024-2025. Karen Thatcher stepped down from organizing the trips to Sight & Sound. Pastor Brad, the Session and Deacons thanked Karen for all her years in heading this up. LaNelle Gallagher is now leading our church in this endeavor. LaNelle did research the seating for S&S for 2024, and found the seating not to be good for our group. Also, transportation for the trip was discussed. It was decided that our church as a group should wait for the 2025 show, and our options for transportation. A **motion** was called to wait until 2025 to go to the show at Sight & Sound, and for LaNelle Gallagher to continue as our Point of Contact for S&S. The **motion** was approved.

Don Pidcock spoke that he is the Clerk of the Corporation, and will give his report at the Annual Congregational Meeting. He also talked about the Boy Scouts, and that he is our Point of Contact to them. Don will be working with one of the leaders of Troop 49, Porter Little. Don will keep us posted of how things are going.

**7:55 PM-Dismissal of the Deacons with prayer.**

**8:00 PM Beginning of Session Business Meeting****Around the Room**

Session Members discussed and shared praises and concerns.

**Moderator Time-** Pastor Brad Morgan

Brad yielded his time to Mike Atzert and is our COM Liaison, who was here this evening and spoke to Session about what should be next in our search in finding a Pastor. Mike and Jeanne Radek from the Presbytery were here last November and spoke to Session about the process. Mike made some points, who God may be calling to lead us, and how can the COM be of help? He asked how our process of obtaining a new pastor may be going. A few of the Session members gave a few answers: We have to talk about a pastoral search. The way we have been going month by month, it has been working, and we have had ordained pastors come in to do our Communion. We are using this time to address financial issues, and we will be working on inviting the community to come through our doors. Another concern is to steer away from a part-time pastor, and to look more for a full-time pastor. Mike then asked what our pastoral needs may be, and what can our church afford for a full-time pastor? We need to consider soon what our needs may be, because the process can take from 1-2 years. The Pastoral pool at this time, isn't very large. How can Mike or Jeanne help with the discernment process? A few ideas were- to have the pastor not use our church for a stepping stone, that our church is a small group and to know our needs. Mike also suggested that in January 2024, that we have a retreat here at the church for the Session to see what they are thinking "Turn the Page Retreat" and have Jeanne come with other Presbyterian volunteers and to see where God is leading Lambertville in their pastoral search.

Mike let us know that the COM is meeting next week, and if we have any questions to get in touch with him. Sue has Mike's information if needed.

**Clerks Correspondence and Session Mail Box-** Susan McCloughan

**Review of Minutes:** Session reviewed the minutes from the October 23, 2023 Session Business Meeting.

A **motion** was called to accept the Minutes as written. All were in favor. The approved Minutes will be sent to Sue/Church Office to be printed in the Book of Minutes and to be included in the Church Newsletter.

A post card was received from the Gideons, and they will be praying for our congregation on 11/11/23. An email was received from the Lambertville Chamber of Commerce to post our events on their website. Sue will get in touch with the COC to see about getting our events posted. Sue was in contact with Steve Emery regarding to come and tune the organ before Christmas. He will get back to Sue to let her know when he can come.

**The Book of Registry-** Bertha Marriott passed away on 10/10/23, and Frank McGough passed away on 11/11/23 both were church members. This was noted in the Book of Registry in November 2023.

**Worship and Music/Church Life-**Karen Thatcher/Joanne DiBlasi

**Insurance Review-** Our Insurance is all paid up to date. SDG was paid from the repairs that they did regarding the lightning strike in June, and the gym cameras are now up and running. Also, the second furnace was affected by the lightning strike, and a new motherboard needs to be ordered. Heather will look into ordering the motherboard. This will go to Franklin Mutual and Decker for the claim to be paid.

Joanne talked about **Young Adult Time**. There is no Young Adult Time on 12/24 for either service.

**Sight & Sound** was talked about earlier.

**Accompanist/Music Director**- Phil will contact Pam Baker from the Centenary Methodist Church to see who their accompanist is, and see if they would be interested in being a substitute for us.

Sue is asked to send out the available dates to our accompanists for December-March for them to sign up to play. Sue will reach out to Lynn G. to see if she would like to become a substitute for us.

Phil would like to reach out to the Elders of Centenary Methodist to see if they would like to have their **Wednesday luncheons** for the community here at our church, if their church closes.

**Building and Grounds**- Pat Durborow/Phil McCloughan/Heather McIntyre/Don Piddcock

**New Technology for the Church Service**- Phil will talk to Stephen McCloughan so that Stephen can order the equipment that is needed for the Livestream.

**Organ**- Was talked about earlier.

**Church Roof**- Phil is waiting for one more estimate from Eiseman Construction. After this is done, the Session will make a decision on which estimate to go with. Most likely the roofing project will happen in the spring 2024.

**Skating and Friday Night Hang**- Steve Chernoski has the skating up and running on Friday nights. Friday Night Hang (FNH) is being revamped at this time. More information on FNH as it becomes available.

**Martinez Landscaping**- Was here today and cleaned up the church grounds.

**Hallway/Church Front Door Issues/Church Bathrooms**- The hinges were checked on the front doors, and the doors seem to be working better. Phil suggested that we get something other than wood to replace what is above the front doors, and paint it so it doesn't peel. This will be looked at further in the spring. For the hallway, it needs some improvements to make it more appealing. Joanne asked if we can get some kind of ventilation for the bathrooms in the church. Heather will check with Nate to see what his ideas are. The AED in the gym is beeping, Heather will do research on how to troubleshoot this problem.

**Budget and Finance**-Heather McIntyre

Our Year-to-Date Summary from 1/1-11/27/23 is that our plate giving is under \$1902.96. This was reviewed by Heather to session. There are no updates at this time on the Lowell Hunter Estate.

No updates on the Boy Scout lawsuit. LPS is using the gym, but only when in the inclement weather. Heather will look into the heating system and update Session as information becomes available.

**Sunday School/Junior Deacons/Youth Group-** Joanne DiBlasi/ Don Pidcock

All was discussed earlier.

**Missions**

Heather spoke about Missions, and that the mission checks will be going out soon. She will text Addie Andino when the checks are mailed out.

**Notations**

**Holy Communion-** Was held on November 5, 2023

**Continuing of Education-** Elders are encouraged to continue in and share the word of God through reading His Word, devotions, prayer and to be involved in education.

**Elders-**Are to continue Pastoral Care as needed.

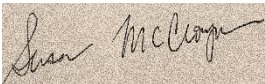
**Prayer Meetings-** Will continue the first Monday of each month with members sharing His Word through readings, thoughts, scripture and prayer. If weather is an issue or for personal reasons keep session members from attending, the session resolved to pray wherever they are during the 7 o'clock hour.

**Session Devotion Rotation-**For the December Meeting is: Heather McIntyre and for January, Don Pidcock

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm and the meeting was closed in Session prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,



Susan McCloughan  
Clerk of Session