

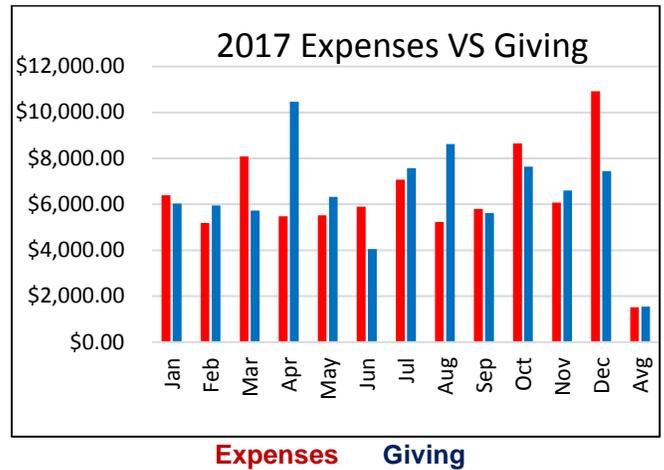
“THE MEADOWS MESSENGER”
A Communication of Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church
February 2018, Issue



**December 2017, Year End 2017
and January 2018
Financial Reports**

We hope that you find this information helpful as you pray for this congregation and evaluate your giving and participation in the worship, work and mission of this part of the Body of Christ. Sincerely, the Session and Pastor.

Tithes and Offerings needed for each week of 2018 = \$1,704.42. This figure is based on a total 2017 budget of \$90,334.00 which was approved by the Session.



DECEMBER

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (5 weeks)	\$8,522.08
Actual Tithes and Offerings received (5 weeks)	\$7,445.00
This results in a budget shortage for this month	(\$1,077.08)
Total Expenses (5 weeks) resulting in a shortage for the month	(\$2,307.37)

YEAR END 2017

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (52 weeks)	\$90,334.00
Actual Tithes and Offerings (52 weeks) received	\$82,050.76
This results in a budget shortage to this point	(\$8,283.24)
Total Expenses (52 weeks) This results in an overage to expenses for the year	\$1,735.57

JANUARY 2018

Because I was gone for two weeks in January I do not have enough data to give you a good picture of our financial situation for that month.

For those of you who understand a chart better than a bunch of numbers, the top of the next column is the 'picture' of our YTD finances for December 2017 (through week 5 of 5):

Session Highlights

December 31st Stated Meeting

The Session took the following actions:

- Reviewed and approved the November financial report.
- Approved the 2018 budget, except for the pastor's terms of call.
- Received a letter from Burke Hospice thanking us for a recent donation of \$220.00.
- Received a letter which accompanied a \$400.00 donation from the Duck Foundation.
- Re-elected Judy Galey as Clerk of Session for 2018.
- Approved the 2018 meeting dates for the Session and the dates communion is planned for 2018.
- Approved the ordination/installation of new elders and the annual congregational meeting for January 14th.
- Examined the elders-elect in preparation for their ordination/installation.
- Commissioned Kathy Staton to represent this congregation at the January Presbytery meeting to be held at Lowell Presbyterian Church on Saturday the 27th.

The Session meeting was opened by Doris Whisnant, who shared with us a poem she wrote for the Christmas season. I have permission to share it with all of you.

One Holy Night, Called Christmas

A brilliant light,
lights heaven and earth
As it hovered the holy birth
It could be seen in lands afar
As it became the Bethlehem star.

Heaven came down to earth this night
Bringing the birth of Jesus,
the worlds brightest light.
God chose an earthy mother
to give birth to his son
So he could be a man and live as one.

He grew, he worked,
he healed the sick, the lame
He even gave life
to some, death had claimed –
Preaching and telling of his Father's plan
He went on his way, an earthly man.

Crowds gathered round him.
Some hearts he did win
As evil grew in the hearts of the other men.
They yelled, they screamed,
eventually carried out their plan.
Jesus gave life, to save the life of man.

The greatest gift God gave to man.
Left his footprint in earthly sand
He came a newborn, He left a grown man
This heavenly visitor, the Savior of man.
Who came to visit a little while,
One holy night, called Christmas.

The Pastor's Ponderings

The season of Lent begins early this year, February 14th. What that means is, as we celebrate Valentine's Day and the love we share with important people in our lives, we begin the season of preparation for Easter. The journey to the cross and then the resurrection is one of reflection and repentance, of humiliation and exaltation, of ashes and dust and light. Lent is a time when we consider the great sacrifice that God has made for us in Jesus Christ and we ponder what we might 'give up' to God in thankful response.

The following is an article I found from the December 2007 issue of "Reformed Worship" which presents an interesting perspective on the season of Lent.

Ashes and Water by Mary S. Hulst

Lent begins in dust and ash: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return." Many an Ash Wednesday I have left worship and gone into grocery stores or ridden public transportation with ashes on my forehead. When I next glance at myself in a restroom mirror, I quickly wipe off the smudge. The dust is met with water and washes clean away.



This small gesture [of washing off the ash smear] anticipates the [end point] of Lent: a celebration of baptism on Easter. In some Christian traditions, people wishing to join the church are discipled during Lent. As [the whole congregation] turn again to self-denial in remembering Christ's sacrifice, [those preparing for baptism] join with us, learning the link between "disciple" and "discipline." On Easter these new disciples are baptized, and [all members of the congregation] are invited to "remember your baptism and be thankful." The water is splashed into the font or shaken from the bough of a tree as people are invited to remember the work of the water in their lives.

Last summer I stood near the headwaters of the Colorado River. A sign, placed there by the fine people of Rocky Mountain National Park, informed me that while near the sign the Colorado looked only like a lovely mountain stream, this same river had dug the valley where I stood, and

from that point it descended through Colorado to Arizona, where it had carved the awe-inspiring beauty of the Grand Canyon.

I looked down at the water sloshing along near my feet. I could have taken off my hiking boots and waded to the other side with no difficulty. The stream was eight feet across, and at its deepest point maybe a foot deep. I knelt next to the river and stuck in a hand. Cold. Clear. And now, with just a bit of me in it, swirling off to Arizona.

I looked at the valley surrounding me, home to elk and moose. I imagined the Grand Canyon. The consistent movement of water over time had resulted in these places. Moving water – living water in the Hebraic sense of the word – is what leads to change and to life. Stagnant water harbors disease. Even inland lakes need inflow and outflow for health.

Moving water, living water, is what John used to baptize people in the Jordan. Moving water was what Jesus claimed to be: “I am living water!”

Your baptism, it could be said, is the headwaters for your faith. Baptism is not just a time to remember what God has done for his people. It is not merely a symbol. In baptism, God acts. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit may begin with the dripping of water on the head of the baptized one, but it does not end there. Like a mountain river it may start slow and small, but over time the water of baptism carves paths into our souls.

We may put our Lenten stock in self-discipline or strength of will, but these aren't the only things that keep us on the straight and narrow. It is not in our own strength that we confide. The waters of baptism weave through our lives with the Holy Spirit charting the course, allowing us to avoid the major drop-offs and eddies – or at least survive them.

I sat with a group of Christians recently, and each of us was asked to recount our baptism. Few of us could do so from our own memories, as most of us had been baptized only weeks after birth. But

all of us could trace the work of God in our lives since that sacramental day.

In the Reformed tradition, we don't see baptism as [the means of salvation]. Baptism alone does not save our souls; it is not a mile-marker on the journey of faith. Baptism isn't merely our start, it is our source. It is the sacrament from which we spring, headlong and headfirst, into the life of faith.

This is due not only to the work of God in our lives, but also to the fact that baptism happens within a community of faith. We are baptized in the midst of people who promise to give aid to our parents and to give aid to us; to comfort, challenge, encourage, and convict. These are the ones who, along with us, give themselves over to the work of the Spirit in their lives and ours. These are the ones who will care for us from the nursery to the nursing home, through days of dust and ash and days of splashing life.

In this Lenten season, remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Then remember your baptism, and be thankful.

Pastor Yvonne

Some Bible Trivia

1. What was the first of the ten plagues in Egypt?
2. Who was the first judge in Israel?
3. Who constructed the first altar?
4. What is the first commandment with a promise attached to it?
5. What is the first color mentioned in the Bible?
6. Who planted the first vineyard?

Adam's Rib

In Sunday school, Mrs. Jones was teaching the children how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when she told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week, his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and said, “Johnny, are you sick?” Little Johnny

responded, “I have a pain in my side. I think I’m going to have a wife.”

We Don’t Wear Signs

Sunny Skyz • December 29, 2017

As I was pulling into work, I was following this car. The sign in the back window says, “Learning stick sorry for any delay.”

Knowing this information, I was very patient with their slow shifting, and honestly he was doing pretty well for still learning. Then I asked myself a tough question: Would I have been just as patient if the sign had not been there? I can almost definitely say no.

We don’t know what someone is going through. We don’t wear signs that illustrate our personal struggles. You don’t see signs taped to people’s shirts that say: “Going through a divorce” or “Feeling depressed” or “Lost a loved one” or “Diagnosed with cancer.”

If we could read visually what those around us are going through, we would definitely be nicer. But we shouldn’t have to see signs and have reasons, to treat strangers with kindness. We should do it anyway, whether we know what is going on or not. Whether they deserve it or not.

Let us give everyone an extra dose of patience, kindness and love.



¹ “Justification and Justice” by George Hunsinger from What Is Justification About?, ed. Michael Weinrich and John Burgess (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), p. 112.

A Second Pastor’s Pondering

As you may know, I was in Pittsburgh from January 15th through the 27th where I was participating in some classes for a Doctor of Ministry degree. Part of what I was required to do during week one of that time, was to write daily reflection papers on assigned readings. One of those reflection papers connects to the previous story about us treating each other with compassion, so I have adapted it slightly for inclusion in this newsletter.

I was struck by what Hunsinger¹ says regarding justice, in light of the Golden Rule: Do to others **as** you would have them do to you. “When we turn to the evangelical ‘as’, the frame of reference shifts. The standard of moral behavior [comes] not from how we would wish to be treated but from how we [have already been treated in Christ]”. We have already been reconciled to God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not by any work or rule of life which we can do and in spite of what we have failed to do. That is a powerful truth of the gospel which is the life’s blood of Christianity.

And yet, this is a truth which is difficult to hold on to in the world in which we live, where those who have been harmed demand justice through punishment and restitution and where even those who observe suffering, demand justice that looks a lot like ‘an eye for an eye’. I am no exception. Especially when it comes to abuses suffered by children, the elderly and those who are less able to take care of themselves, my natural tendency is to want to see the offenders punished to the full extent of the law. And if they suffer in the process, well ...

But, the gospel demands that we all reconsider. Our new life in Christ demands that we look with compassion at the offender and pray that God would manifest mercy in that person’s life and begin in him or her also, the transformation God

has begun in us through Christ. That doesn't seem much like justice, but then, we have not received justice either; we have received mercy because of God's desire to redeem us. And now we are called to show mercy to those around us.

So, our prayers might need to include times of reflection on where mercy is needed in our lives and relationships. Not as a way to let ourselves and other folks 'off the hook', but as a way to participate more fully in grace as defined by Rohls.² "Grace is a quality of divine relational behavior toward human beings as sinners". This is not to say that we have the will or the power to show mercy on our own. As I have noted earlier, many of us have a tendency to demand suffering for those who cause harm to others. But when we release ourselves and the sinners around us into God's merciful hands, we increase our potential to witness transformation in their lives as well as continued transformation in our own. And we can more fully experience what it means to be united in Christ with others in whom Christ is also at work.

Pastor Yvonne



Bible Trivia Answers

1. The Nile River turned to blood – Exodus 7:14-24.
2. Othniel – Judges 3:9
3. Noah – Genesis 8:20

² "Justification and Sanctification" by John P. Burgess, same book, p. 64.

4. "Honor your father and other, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you." – Deuteronomy 5:16, Ephesians 6:2-3
5. Green – Genesis 1:30
6. Noah – Genesis 9:20

Doings at QMPC

Elders on Call

- February 04th – 10th – Anita Woods
 February 11th – 17th – Judy Galey
 February 18th – 24th – Riddle Smith
 February 25th – March 03rd – Doris Whisnant

Ministry with the Children

- February 04th – the children will participate in some way with communion, Betty Williams (downstairs)
 February 11th – Ruth Pershing (sermon), Gladys Ross (downstairs)
 February 18th – Gladys Ross (sermon), Christine Rose (downstairs)
 February 25th – Heather Kramer (sermon), Lelia Bruder (downstairs)

Upcoming Events

- Monday, **February 05th** – Circle # 1, Ruth Preston's home @ 10
 Tuesday, **February 06th** – birthday luncheon, Timberwoods @ noon
 Tuesday, **February 06th** – Christian Education committee @ 6
 Sunday, **February 11th**, spaghetti fundraiser following worship, fellowship hall
 Monday, **February 19th** – Circle # 2 @ 6

Birthdays

- Mae Smith – February 14th
 Kenny Harney – February 16th

If you have been absent from worship recently, you can listen to sermons on the website:

www.quakermeadowspc.org.