

Pastor's Note

FULL TO THE BRIM!

Blaise Pascal, the brilliant 17th French mathematician, penned a lifetime of thoughts on little scraps of paper that he stuffed into the lining of his coat. These pensees were found and published after his death. His book by that name is still in print. Pensee 148 reads like this: "The infinite abyss can be filled with only an infinite and immutable reality – in other words by God himself." That is to say, the empty place in us cannot finally be filled by stuff. It cannot be filled by success. It cannot be filled by culture. It cannot even be filled by religion – it can only be filled by the infinite, by God himself.

Religion and God of course are not the same thing. You can have religion without much God and some people encounter God without much religion. There is an analogy for their relationship that, if you don't push it too far, I think is helpful. According to this metaphor, religion is like a beautiful wine chalice, and God is like the fine wine inside the chalice. The chalice cannot hold all the wine in the world of course. In the same way, religion can never "contain" all of God. But the chalice enables you to drink the wine. In the same way religion provides a way for us to encounter God.

To continue the analogy, you can decorate this chalice; you can make it out of finest gold and deck with out with lovely jewels. But without wine inside, the chalice is just a pretty bauble. In the same way, you can make religion beautiful with fine liturgy, lovely buildings, great music and beautiful theology, but without the living God, religion is just a nice old cultural artifact. You can make sure the chalice does not leak, patching up holes and pounding out dents. Similarly, we can strive to make sure that our religion is in good repair, that the institution faithfully holds to what truth we can know about God and does not let it leak away. But still it's quite possible for even the most glorious chalice imaginable to be quite empty of the wine. In the same way, it's quite and terribly possible for religion to be empty of God.

My wish for all of us this Christmas and in the new year is that our chalices be full --- full to the brim ----with the wine of God --- the real, living God ---- come to us as "Immanuel."

Dave Gilbert, Pastor



¹ I am indebted to, and thank, Michael Lindvall for the analogy/metaphor.

Prayer Concerns



Church Family

ROGER WEAVER
DANIEL MCPHERSON
BARBARA GILLESPIE & FAMILY
MADELINE HURT
JUANITA BOLING
CHARLIE ASBURY
LAURA KINCER
JERRY CROMER
STANLEY STEVENSON
SUE KEENE
PEGGY ASBURY
DAWN & DAVID OLINGER
RICHARD WITTEN
SAM ADKINS
EDDIE NASH

MARTHA MASSIE
JEANETTE RAMEY
RENIA HALE PEERY
VICKY RINEHART
BARBARA SISCO
PRISCILLA DILLOW
BOB PARKS
BARBARA STANSBURY
ROBERT HELDRETH
CONNIE FLETCHER
BETTY KELLY
PARKER NECESSARY
GEORGIA HALE
DOROTHY NUCKLES

Active Military Personnel: John Patrick Flynn, and Jon Wright
Missionaries: The Wellers and The Ardnts

Others

Pam Killen (knee surgery)
Tom Stranger (brother of Dolores Pruitt)
Sarah Kitts (granddaughter of Carolyn Kitts)
Lee Ann Stump
Trish Cox
Melissa Parks (Bob Parks' niece)
Larry Stroup & Ed Smith (neighbors of Randall & Martha Cooper)
Shelley Keene-Walsh (daughter of Sue Keene)
Jeannie Putman (Connie Fletcher's niece)
Jimmy O'Neill (Dora's grand-nephew)
Charlotte Wilson (daughter of Martha Massie)
Gilliam Shelton (Debbie Crews' father)
Rev. Curtis Murray
Dustin Hicks
Blanche Carpenter (Ron Carpenter's mother)

November 2016 Session Action

Session Action

- † *The Session approved a request from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Chair, Alice Freeman, to endorse Dr. Don Michael Hudson to be an inquirer in preparation for ordination,*

Don't Forget...

Sunday, December 11th at 10:00 am

The Ardnts will be visiting and will have a presentation to share with us

Sunday, December 11th at 5:00 pm

Adventure Time/T.A.G
Christmas Play

Saturday, December 24th at 7:00 pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 25th

NO MORNING WORSHIP



Don't miss the Music of Christmas!

Sunday, December 4 at 3:00 p.m.
Community Chorus Concert

Southwest Virginia Community College presents its annual Christmas Concert featuring the SVCC Community Chorus and the Southwest Virginia Children's Choir. This is a yearly highlight of the season for our community and region.

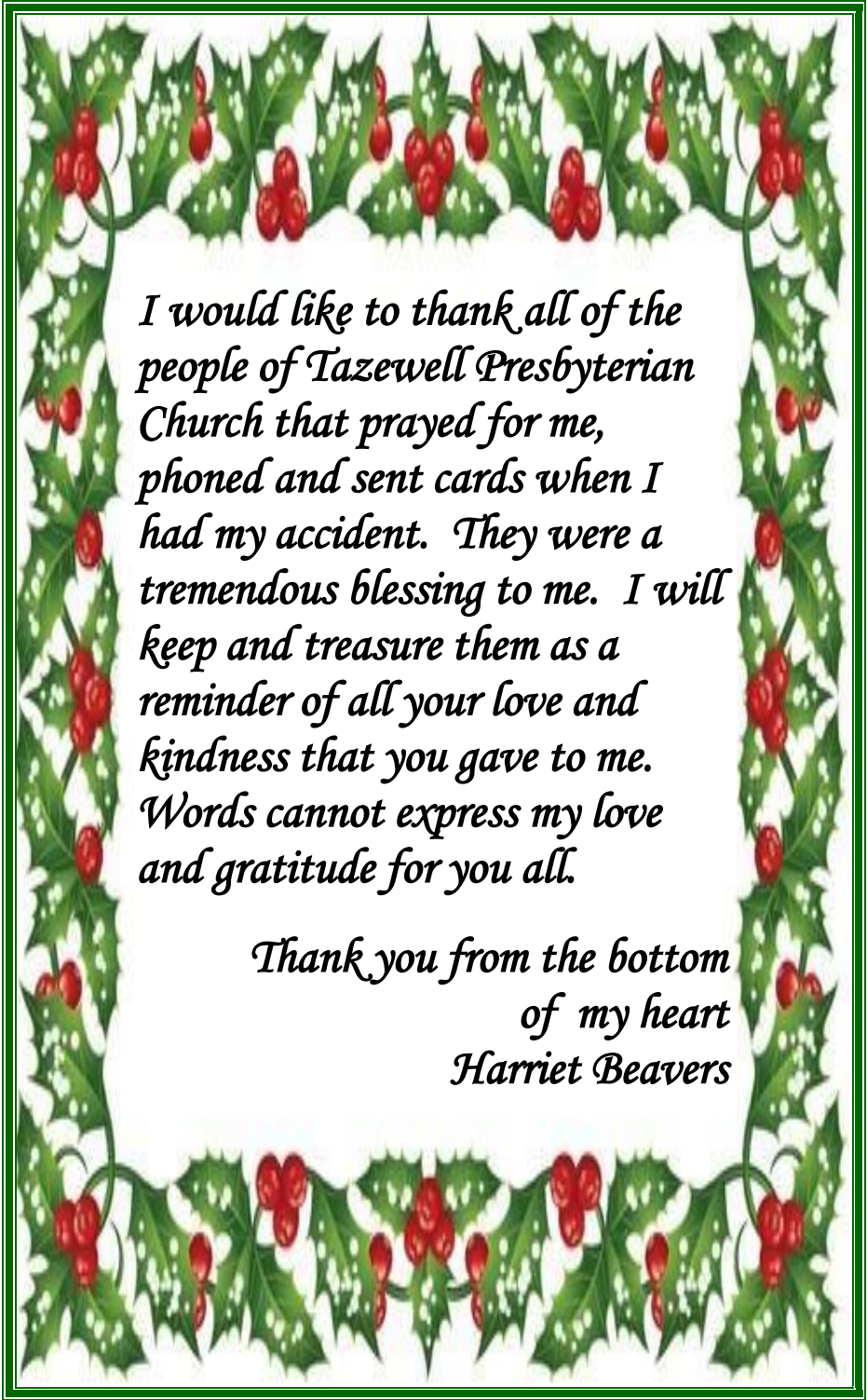
Sunday, December 11 at 5:00 p.m.
TPC Youth Christmas Play

Our children and youth from Adventure Time (grades K-5) and TAG (The Adventure Gang, grades 6-8) will present "Beneath a Shining Star," an entertaining musical play with an important message for the Christmas season. If you think the kids' Christmas program is "just another pageant, with children in bathrobes and a doll in the manger," you have not been to one of ours! Please support our church's youth, and enjoy this lively musical!

Sunday, December 18 at 5:00 p.m.
TPC Chancel Choir Cantata

Our Chancel Choir presents the Christmas Cantata. This is a worship service of song and Scripture, taking us through the wondrous story of the coming of the Christ child. Participation by instrumentalists from the SVCC Music Program will enhance and enliven the evening of music.

A reception for the entire church follows the cantata, with thanks to our Fellowship and Missions Committee!



I would like to thank all of the people of Tazewell Presbyterian Church that prayed for me, phoned and sent cards when I had my accident. They were a tremendous blessing to me. I will keep and treasure them as a reminder of all your love and kindness that you gave to me. Words cannot express my love and gratitude for you all.

*Thank you from the bottom
of my heart
Harriet Beavers*



Dear Church family and friends,

Steve and I cannot believe that we have been in Tazewell 36 years. From the very first day we moved here we have found our church home at Tazewell Presbyterian Church . We love our Presbyterian roots and especially love our church family. We have celebrated births (including the births of all 4 of our children) here. We have been so thankful for the baptism of our children in the sanctuary of Tazewell Presbyterian Church. We appreciate the congregation's commitment to raising our children up in the "admonition of the Lord".. You have been our "Village".

Sometimes there are sad times and hurts. At those times we have seen the church "lift people up" with prayer and in acts of kindness. We have experienced that love.


We have enjoyed the leadership of many different pastors. We have experienced the growing and shrinking pains of the church. We hate to miss the next chapter of our church. It looks like it is going to be a good one under the leadership of Pastor Dave.

Of course, in "our departing" you have made it both difficult and smooth. Is that possible? We are sad to leave you but we feel much loved as we go. The reception you gave for us was truly so lovely. We appreciate the loving work of the hands that prepared such a wonderful day. Thank you.

Thank you also for the cards with special words and for the gifts of remembrance.

We will miss everyone. You have made our life in Tazewell so rich with friendship, memories, and love.

*May God bless you and
keep you in His Care
Steve and Vicky*





Thank you for the lovely cards, calls, visits, and foods during my recent illness. Please continue to keep in touch.

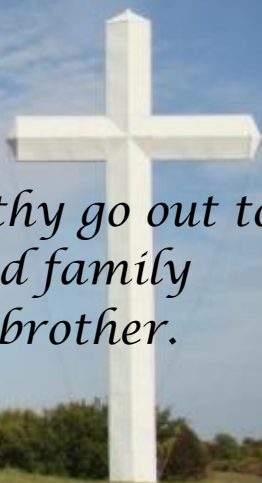
*Love to all,
Madeline Hurt*



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May God Grant you peace.

*Our prayers and sympathy go out to
Barbara Gillespie and family
for the death of her brother.*





Christmas
Luncheon
&
Community Outreach
Program

Wednesday,
December 14th
at 11:00 am in the
Tazewell Presbyterian
Church Fellowship Hall

The Preschool will perform
their Christmas Program and
music will be provided by
Andy Necessary and his
musical group.