

# The Pioneer

402 West Moro Drive  
Moro Illinois 62067  
618-377-6395

DECEMBER 2014  
REV. J. MARC WENDLETON

## Mission Statement

**Moro Presbyterian Church is a missional church. Our mission is to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything we have been commanded, through our love for one another, sharing the Word of Jesus Christ, fellowship, stewardship, education, music and Christ centered mission work in our church, community and world.**

***Matthew 28:19***

***Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.***

## From Rev. Wendleton:

### Mary's Blessings

...the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God...Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38

In our Bible, Matthew and Luke tell the story of Jesus' birth. I prefer Luke's version over Matthew's. Luke relates the story from Mary's point of view, and I have always enjoyed the story

of the Angel's visit to Mary. This is not included in Matthew's version.

We know little of Mary's life. We know she was engaged to be married to Joseph, and she was a virgin. We speculate that she was a young woman, perhaps in her middle teens. Her family is from a rural community, and most likely, is not wealthy. We assume she is brought up with a deep rooted faith, and she knew God through Jewish scriptures and the lessons learned from her teachers. We know of her unconditional willingness to serve God.

The Angel brought her life changing news. She was pregnant and would give birth to the Messiah. News of a pregnancy is life changing in itself, but to find out that she is carrying the Son of God must have been overwhelming. In addition, God chose this moment to tell her before her marriage, no doubt resulting in scandal. She knows that everyone will talk, and the community will judge her, her family, and even Joseph.

God often calls other people into special service, and they almost always challenge God by saying that they are not equipped to accept His calling. The excuses include: Not having the gift of public speaking, not being of the right social class, or they are too young or too old. In Exodus 4:10,

Moses complains that he is not an eloquent speaker and he cannot possibly lead all the slaves out of Egypt. Mary is the exception to this pattern. She does not try telling God that she cannot do what He asks, but accepts her calling with faithful innocence, seeing this as a blessing, not a burden.

During this Holiday Season, let us remember to come to our Lord with humble hearts and to accept our calling to give generously and serve faithfully. Let us say yes to the Lord instead of finding excuses why we cannot serve the Lord. Let us see our tasks as blessings, not burdens.

Merry Christmas,  
Marc

### **MORO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Session Meeting, November 10, 2104**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. with prayer by Moderator, Rev. Marc Wendleton in the Garden Room. Present were: Barbara Hitch, Marlyn Gray, Jack McClelland, Tom Bivens and Kirk Johnson (5 of 6). Bob Ballard was absent. Financial Secretary, Jeanne Johnson, was also present.

Discussion of the book “Rich Church, Poor Church” followed.

The minutes of the regular meeting of October 13 were before the Session. Barb Hitch made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was approved. The Treasurer’s report was reviewed and approved. A new section indicating balances of all CDs was added to the monthly report. It was noted that the October 31 report shows (4,263.00) in the Sound System Fund. Since closing the books in October, we have received \$20,180 (this includes the grant from CMDT). At this time, the balance in the Sound System Fund is \$15,917.00. The transfer from the Memorial Fund to the Sound System Fund for Freeda Bolin’s memorial was made during October.

#### **Clerk of Session Report:**

●The CD which matured on 10/21 was re-invested at First National Bank.

●A motion was made by Barb Hitch to approve the proposed revisions to the By-Laws:

- Incorporating the new mission statement;
- Nominating committee: all members of the nominating committee will serve two years
- The paragraph regarding the Financial Secretary was changed to “Financial Secretary or designee.”
- Worship Committee and Administration Committee responsibilities were revised to include: Worship Committee: Any music will be coordinated with the Worship Committee and the music Director; Administration: All donations made to the church must have approval of the Session.

The approval by the congregation of the revised By-Laws will be included on the Annual Congregational Meeting agenda in January.

●In December annual reports for the Presbytery will be presented for approval.

#### **Old Business:**

●On November 2, 30 were served communion and four were served during home visits for a total of 34.

#### **Committee Reports:**

##### **Administration (Jack McClelland & Kirk Johnson):**

●Kathi Cooper offered to buy new lights and installation of same. This was approved by the Session.

##### **Worship (Barbara Hitch):**

●Hanging of the Greens is 11/23/14.

##### **Membership (Kirk Johnson and Tom Bivens):**

●Rev. Marc will schedule a meeting with prospective new members sometime in January.

●The per capita for 2015 is \$30.29 per person. Based on 54 members (from most recent report) the total is \$1,635.66. An article will be

included in the newsletter reminding members to pay their per capita.

**Stewardship (Bob Ballard):**

• Stewardship Potluck is Sunday, 11/15 following church.

**Budget (Barb Hitch):**

• A budget for 2015 was presented for approval. Kirk made a motion to approve the budget as presented and the motion carried.

**Nominating Committee:**

• No report.

**Pastor’s Report:**

1. Sound System: Output Unlimited has informed Rev. Marc that parts have been ordered. A bid for the electrical work was received in the amount of \$2,195. We will pursue other bids. It will be necessary to remove two pews to allow room for the console for the system. Discussion followed about getting an office chair for the person operating the sound system, and chairs similar to the choir chairs next to the console. Patty Cooper and Brandy Wendleton have volunteered to train for operation of the system. Session members will also be trained.

**New Business:**

• None

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kirk Johnson, Clerk of Session

**Sunday, December 7 is Crisis Center**



**Sunday.**

Remember to bring canned goods, pasta, cereals, peanut

butter, pancake mix, syrup, soup, crackers, canned meat (tuna or chicken), TP, diapers, etc. for the

Crisis Center. In October we donated 56 food items. Our church is very generous in their giving. Keep up the good work! Times are difficult for many people, and especially the people who count on the Crisis Center.

**W**e will also be collecting toys, mittens, hats under the tree for distribution to the Oasis Center at Christmas.

The Hope Center is also collecting toys for area children – you can give to the Hope Center individually if you wish.

**T**he **Saddlebags** are out again! We have some new people in our church, so you may not be familiar with the Saddlebag Campaign. When you get the bag, make your decision on your annual pledge and pass the bag on to the next name on the list. If you are not able to deliver the bag yourself or are unable to get in touch with the next person, let an elder know, and one of them will take care of it for you.

As you make your decisions about your pledges for 2015, please know:

▪ The Session recognizes our members are very generous in their giving when asked for items outside the operating budget: sound system, heifer project, Action International, etc.

▪ In 2014, we collected \$901 in per capita gifts. We were assessed \$31.80 per member for a total of \$1,845 as our share. As you can see, the church had to pay the full amount even though contributions were not equal to the assessed amount.

▪ The Budget Committee approved a budget for 2015 based on pledges for 2014 of \$58,220. Expenses were projected at \$74,714. When the Saddlebag Campaign is complete, the income amount will be adjusted.

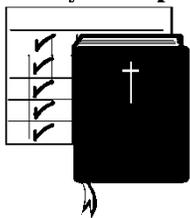
▪ Normal operating expenses for the year are pastor’s salary, organist’s salary, insurance for the church and manse, and utilities. These total \$62,000 each year.

Please keep in mind that your annual pledge goes into the Operating Fund (unless designated otherwise). If you wish to give to Deacons, Building, Sound, Per Capita, General Mission (or

some of the other envelopes in your box), these are separate from your annual pledge. When developing a budget, all pledges are considered to be for the Operating Fund. Please keep the Saddlebags moving so the committee can get them back and on to the Budget Committee. As you all know, the saddlebags give the Budget Committee a general idea of what income will be available for next year. We need the bags back as soon as possible.

The Stewardship and Budget Committee thank you for your cooperation with this annual project.

### WEEKLY Study Group



Bible study is Tuesday night starting at 7 p.m. This year we will be studying the works of John starting with the Gospel of John then later in the year we will do the Epistles of John and finish up with the Book of Revelations. (It will follow Be Our Guest on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month.) I

hope you will join us.



### A Musical Note:

**We have room for all voices in our choir.**

**If you love to sing, please join us to “Praise the Lord!” We rehearse every Wednesday at 7:15 p.m.**

**Marcia Holder, Choir Director**



### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 8 – Vivian Cook
- 14 – Brian Holder
- 27 – Jessalyn McElyea
- 29 – Jim Wiese

### DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

**26 – Darlene and Don Gusewelle**

**30 – Marlyn (Susie) and Charles Gray**

*(If you don't see your name listed for birthdays or anniversaries, please let me know so that I can add you to the list ---Jeanne)*

If you have something to add to the newsletter, please give it to Jeanne Johnson by the day after the session meeting each month. You can mail it to me at 6 Magnolia, Moro, Illinois; you can e-mail it to me at [jkjohnson1967@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jkjohnson1967@sbcglobal.net); or you can call me with information at 618-610-2231.

**C**ongratulation to Marcia Holder on the birth of a new grand-daughter. Blessings for this new life that joins Marcia's family...and prayers that God might touch her lips to speak kind thoughts, her ears to hear the Word of God preached rightly, her hands to do the work of God in the world and her feet that she may walk in the ways of faith always.....

### Deacon's Corner

The next Deacons Meeting is December 3. We will prepare fruit baskets for members and friends who are shut-ins or ill.

We made plans to give gifts from the Deacons Fund to six charities (Crisis Center, Hope Center, Salvation Army, BAMA, St. Anthony's Hospice and Oasis). The Deacons use the proceeds from the Salad Buffet for these gifts. We also manage the Charity Fund and provide bereavement dinners from our funds.

The Church clean up day is scheduled for January 10 (weather permitting). A list will be posted soon of jobs to complete for the clean up project.



**Thank you for your service to our**

country.

**God Bless You!**

**Dear Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. In Jesus name, Amen.**

Travis Bivens

Tim Nooner

Jeff Gramlick

Erin Fager



**We give thanks to God for the freedom to worship and enjoy Christian fellowship, for caregivers, for peacemakers, for God's faithfulness and blessings**

**We pray for:**

**Our Government**

**Our President**

**Our World and Entire Congregation**

**Resources for our Ministry**

**Those suffering loss in recent natural disasters**

**Our Members**

**Our Neighbors**

**Those who are ill**

**Our Community**

**Moro Presbyterian Church**

**And we offer additional prayers for those with specific concerns or illnesses:**

Mark McClure's Mother, Sherry

Evelyn Jones (Marcia's mother)

Jean Rosenkranz

Eileen Becker

Harriet Cooper

Bob Ballard's Father

Pat Ballard's Mother

Hope Bivens

***"Be Our Guest"***

Menus for December are:

December 9 Chicken and Rice Casserole  
With broccoli

Bread

Salad

Pies

December 23 Spaghetti lovers Soup  
Sandwiches

Apple Crisp

Remember our dinners are open for everyone. If you don't feel like cooking, you are welcome to share a meal and our fellowship. Adult Bible Study follows our Be Our Guest Dinners at 7:00 p.m. Blessings on each and every one – May your kindness come back to you many times over.

In January we will begin our sixth year of this project. Did you know that our volunteers and helpers provide contributions, food and all the products for Be Our Guest? (We are not reimbursed by the church and consider this part of our giving to God and his work.)

**O**ur church has many components of our **Hunger Ministry:** our Be Our Guest Dinners, participating in Meals on Wheels, Souper Bowl Sunday, and the on-going collection of food items to the Crisis Center (to name a few). Now we are beginning another component: The **Backpack Program.** The area schools provide free lunches and breakfast to those in need. However, it is very sad that some children do not have food on the weekend (from when they leave school on Friday until they return on Monday). We are working with Bethalto School District to identify some of these children and send an inconspicuous backpack home with them on Friday filled with non-perishable items for them to consume over the weekend. They should return the

backpack on Monday to be refilled the following Friday.

Some of the items we are including are: cereal boxes, raisins (in boxes), snack carrots, breakfast bars, fruit or applesauce cups, cheese dip with breadsticks, 100% juice, sandwich crackers, apples, clementines, oranges, peanuts or sunflower seeds. We have to be careful for allergies and are working with the school social workers, so we are not including chocolate or peanut butter. Items are individually packed. The Session has approved funding this program through our church's budget. We do have to be careful of the items we include, so we are not asking for donations of these items; however, if you would like to donate specifically for the Backpack Program, you can include an envelope in the offering collection designated Backpack Program. Thanks for your support of this new program. Any assistance you can offer will be greatly appreciated.

The **Bethalto Spirit Walk** is scheduled for December 14. This is an amazing presentation by the entire community. Concerts are scheduled for the day also. Several members of our church participate – so if you need more information check with Kathi Cooper.

We have several new faces in our church and they might find it interesting to learn more about our **Christmas Traditions at Moro Presbyterian Church**

The "Hanging of the Greens" takes place on the first Sunday of Advent. Lunch is served to people who help hang the greens. After lunch, we decorate the church for the Christmas season. We have several ornaments and decorations that have been lovingly made over the years. More than 35 years ago, a church group of women made several banners to celebrate Christmas. We are still using some of these banners, and some new ones have been added.

The beautiful Crismons which decorate the tree were made by church members almost 20 years ago. Crismons are Christian symbols in white and gold, to remember our Lord and Savior. They are made of felt

and decorated with white and gold sequins, pearls and cording.

During the Christmas season, you will see gloves, hats, mittens and toys appear under the tree. While you're out shopping pick up any of these items. We donate them to the Crisis Center or Oasis.

Advent is celebrated the four Sundays before Christmas. The Advent Wreath has five candles on it (4 pink and 1 purple). Each Sunday, a candle on the Advent wreath is lit, and the final candle is lit on Christmas Eve. Different church members read scripture as the candles are lit each week. At the beginning of Advent, we distribute "love tins" to church members and friends. We encourage you to fill these with change (or bills) during the holidays and bring the tins with you on Christmas Eve. We then present them at the altar.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services: Communion will be served and we read the Christmas story from the Bible and sing Christmas Carols. At the end of the night, the lights are turned off, and candles are lit as we sing Silent Night. It's one of my favorite Christmas traditions and it will probably become one of yours. Sometimes, as we sing Silent Night, Dana (who is a deaf education teacher and Hope Bivens' granddaughter) will sign Silent Night.

**Salvation Army Bell Ringing:** Our annual Salvation Army bell ringing is scheduled for **Saturday, December 6, 2014**. We are to ring from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Schnucks in Bethalto. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board....Hope you can ring!!!



Starting November 30<sup>th</sup>, Adult Sunday School class will be doing a series called Under Wraps. Under Wraps is an exciting Advent experience that explores four characteristics of God described in the Old Testament and then revealed perfectly and completely through Jesus: **God Is Expectant, God Is Dangerous, God Is Jealous and God Is Faithful**. Hope you will join us at 9:15 Sunday mornings.

**C**hildren Education: We are also offering school age children Sunday School class at 9:15 in the Narthex of the church. Each class will focus on the same lessons that will be reflected in worship. We will also continue to offer Christian Education during worship service for all kids at any age.

## 2014 Christmas Joy Offering

### Living the Christian Life

Patricia Hsu Payan was born in Taiwan, lived her childhood in Brazil, and grew up a Buddhist. Today, she is a devoted Presbyterian and wants to thank people like you for making that possible.

“If I hadn’t gone to Presbyterian Pan American School, I might not be Christian today,” she says. “Coming from a third-world country, we couldn’t afford the school. It was very difficult for my parents to even send me to the US, let alone pay for school.”

She was able to attend Pan Am in the mid-’80s because of gifts to programs like the Christmas Joy Offering.

“While I was there, I received a scholarship,” Payan says. “I knew that scholarships didn’t just happen. Somebody had to give the money to the school in order for me to get the scholarship. It taught me how to give. Today, in the world, we’re so busy with our lives and making money, but Pan Am taught me there is something more important.”

Payan arrived at the school hoping only to learn English and prepare herself for college. She says a strict schedule and small, close-knit community setting helped her develop good study habits and a strong work ethic. But, it was a deeper lesson that meant the most.

“We had chapel every day; we had church on Sunday,” she said. “Every morning after breakfast I

would stop by our chapel and pray. I would sit there and reflect and talk to God. That was the foundation of what I do today—this is something I developed at Pan Am.”

Payan graduated from Pan Am in 1986. She went on to college at the University of Texas, where she received her Master’s in Business Administration. She is now the owner and president of Physicians Management Services. And she still believes in giving as others gave to her—serving on the Mission Committee for Forest Hills Presbyterian Church in Helotes, Texas,

“I’m growing closer to God as I move along,” she said. “Now, I’m so very grateful for being able to go to the school. Presbyterians who contribute should know that, no matter how big or small the donation, they are doing something good. It’s not just an opportunity for education, but an opportunity to expose a child to the Christian faith who might not otherwise have that. To learn about the Christian faith—to me, that’s the most important part.”

Christmas Joy helps thousands of people throughout the world giving them a life that they cannot do for themselves. The Christmas Joy offering will be collected on December 21<sup>st</sup>. Please give generously.

***Andy Rooney Observations-(ex-60 Minutes – a man who had the gift of saying so much with so few words)...***

### **I’ve learned...**

*That the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person.*

*That when you’re in love, it shows.*

*That just one person saying to me, “you’ve made my day!” makes my day.*

*That having a child fall asleep in your arms is one of the most peaceful feelings in the world.*

*That being kind is more important than being right.*

*That you should never say no to a gift from a child.*

*That I can always pray for someone when I don't have the strength to help him in some other way.*

*That no matter how serious your life requires you to be, everyone needs a friend to act goofy with.*

*That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.*

*That simple walks with my father around the block on summer nights when I was a child did wonders for me as an adult.*

*That life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.*

*That we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for.*

*That money doesn't buy class.*

*That it's those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular.*

*That under everyone's hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved.*

*That to ignore the facts does not change them.*

*That when you plan to get even with someone, you are only letting that person continue to hurt you.*

*That love, not time, heals all wounds.*

*That the easiest way for me to grow as a person is to surround myself with people smarter than I am.*

*That everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile.*

*That no one is perfect until you fall in love with them.*

*That life is tough, but I'm tougher.*

*That opportunities are never lost; someone will take the ones you miss.*

*That when you harbor bitterness, happiness with dock elsewhere.*

*That I wish I could have told my Mom and Dad that I love them one more time before they passed away.*

*That one should keep his words both soft and tender, because tomorrow he may have to eat them.*

*That a smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.*

*That when your newly born grandchild holds your little finger in his little fist, you are hooked for life.*

*That everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you are climbing it.*

*That the less time I have to work with, the more things I get done.*

**Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as you can.**

**May every joy be yours...  
This Christmas season and throughout  
the New Year.**