First Baptist Church
WELLSBORO

November News & Views

This month's note for our church ministry is a bit different. Two books I have found quite helpful in the conversation of revitalization (and both of which I recently discussed with our congregation at various points) include Joseph Hellerman's *When the Church was a Family* and Colin Marshall and Tony Payne's *The Trellis and the Vine*. I believe our church is at a great point to be thinking through some of the biblical principles outlined in these helpful volumes.

1. A Family:

We see repeated throughout the New Testament language of family. Brother (and sister) language is explicitly utilized in 19 of the 21 epistles. That language is not merely affectionate titles or honorifics simply for sounding nice. No; God's Word uses the language on purpose, directing the early church to identify themselves as what Joseph Hellerman describes as a "society of surrogate siblings." As we've mentioned at several points this year, especially from Peter's epistles, if we are called to unity as surrogate siblings, we must strive and persevere together for that unity. Those who are in union with Christ by the Spirit of God *must* fight to love one another and reconcile with one another—proving the work of Christ's gospel is transforming the earthly "family" into the heavenly family of God. We aren't just a family when everything is nice and tidy, real family is revealed when we have to work out differences, opinions, conflicts, pains, and shared griefs. Amen!

2. A Family in Ministry:

We see repeated throughout the New Testament language of ministry. For as much as we reflect on the elders and deacons, the structure of authority, submission to God-given authority figures (shepherds) and church discipline, we also see this as a shared, communal work. Colin Marshall and Tony Payne provide a unique allegory to a principle as old as the church itself: church leaders and members ought to focus on people and not on programs. The leadership of the church, as a family-focused leadership, are meant to act as a trellis that supports a growing vine. Trellises without vines serve only themselves. But a trellis that supports and trains up a vine will make the vine demonstrate the glory given to it. The healthiest churches as people-growing churches. We want to train up new generations who train up others for the sake of making more trellises and healthier vines. We don't merely look to authority figures and hope they do the things we want. We look to our brothers and sisters and see where we can grow and where we can be trained by leaders.

As we look to our own church we want to ensure two things are happening: first, that we are growing closer together in siblinghood and, second, that we are identifying and investing in faithful and spiritually mature brothers and sisters who train up fellow-members to the same work. We look ahead to our women's, men's, and other discipleship and mentoring opportunities and call on the Lord for the work of family ministry and vinedresser ministry!

If you would like to read these two books, or other recommendations, I am more than happy to assist you. These kinds of conversations are helpful ways to identify just how the Lord works in His church.

Pastor Chris

A Prayer for Reading Your Bibles

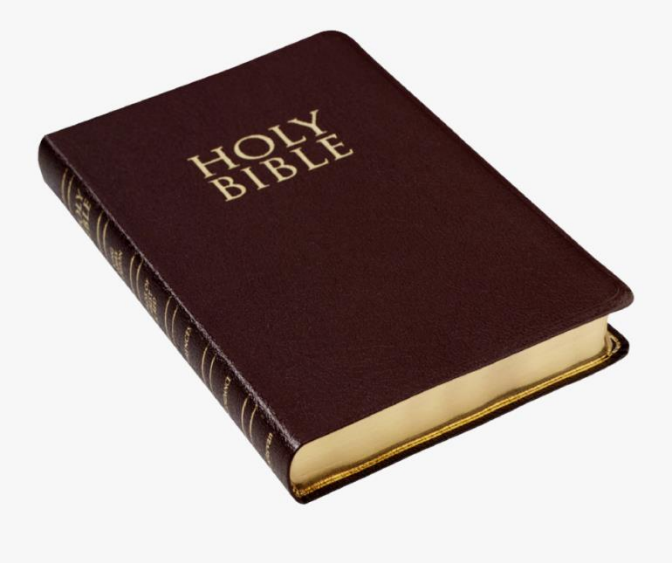
I recently watched a video from one of my favorite theologians, Michael Reeves, entitled "A Theology of Writing." Now I'll be honest, when I first clicked on it, I thought to myself "They've got a 'theology' for everything nowadays!" but I will also confess that it only took a few minutes for Dr. Reeves to convince me that there is indeed a beautiful theology to writing! If you would like to see the video here is the URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCUUjr3xRvA&t=1537s.

Now, you may not be a writer, and so you might be thinking, "what does a 'theology of writing' have to do with me, pastor?" I'm glad you asked! As I was listening to his lecture, he gave three main points, rooted in who God is and what He does, to then shape our understanding of writing. Space here prevents me from sharing his details, but Reeves notes that God is author, specifically the Bible, and He has given us His Word as the primary means of making Himself known to us. And even more, it is the role of Jesus, the eternal Son of God to make known the Father to His disciples, since He alone knows the Father from eternity past (John 17:25-26). So, because the Son knows God, the Son alone can make God known to others, and this was the mission of the Son (John 1:18). It is only through Jesus that we may know God, and it is because God has written down the good news of Christ's work in the Scriptures that we may have such knowledge. But, as Reeves notes, we have not yet mentioned the Spirit! And indeed, without the Spirit we are not yet complete in our understanding of how God makes Himself known to us! For even though Jesus has made known the Father, our hearts are darkened and enslaved by "the god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4), so that "the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." (John 3:19). Therefore, we need the Spirit of God, who is sent by the Father and the Son to open our eyes to the beauties of God and to love Him (Rom 5:5). So, as Reeves says, "just as the Father sends forth His Word that He may be known, so He sends forth His Spirit that He may be loved."

This is a beautiful trinitarian theology, and Reeves masterfully takes it and develops a very practical theology of writing, but I want to turn it to a theology for reading our Bibles.

The Bible is the most glorious Book in all the world! For the Lord God Almighty has revealed Himself through it to us so that we might know Him. Therefore all of our lives ought to be toward knowing God in this Book. But we must also acknowledge that our hearts are naturally sinful and that we by ourselves cannot love God, no matter how much we study His Word. Though Christ has revealed the Father, if we are not indwelt by the Spirit, then His Words will ultimately fall on deaf hearts. Thus I propose a trinitarian prayer for us to make as we approach His Word each day. First, praise the Father that He has gifted us such a great grace in His Word. Second, pray that He would indeed make Himself known to you as you read and mediate on His Word, and that the Son would reveal the Father to you. And third, pray earnestly that the Spirit of God would cause your heart to burn with love and passion for the gloriously good God who has made Himself known to you, so that you might experience the answer to our Lord's prayer for you: "O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent Me. I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:25-26).

Pastor Joshua



Mission News

Heart of Tioga provides free and confidential pro-life pregnancy services to our community, believing that women and men have a right to get information from a resource that will not profit from the choices and pregnancy decisions they make. Clients receive evidence-based medical information about pregnancy, fetal development, lifestyle issues, and related concerns.

Heart of Tioga equips parents through life-affirming and compassionate counseling, medical services, education, and essential resources. Each client receives the care and attention they need, enabling them to make informed decisions for themselves and their future. Clients are served without regard to age, race, income, nationality, religious affiliation, disability, or other arbitrary circumstances. Client information is held in strict and absolute confidence.

The Board of Missions has chosen Heart of Tioga to be the recipient of this year's Thanksgiving Offering. Please prayerfully consider contributing to this mission by using the special "Thanksgiving Offering" envelope in your box of offering envelopes, or by using a regular missions offering envelope with "Heart of Tioga" written on the front. Cash and checks placed in an offering plate in the sanctuary in this manner will be directed to their work.

Information about Heart of Tioga and their ongoing work will be available on the Missions bulletin board throughout the month of November. You can also learn more about their mission at https://heartoftioga.org.

From Esther Derolus

"There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God." 1 Samuel 2:2

Dear Family and Friends God bless you, receive a warm hug from us here in the sunny and warm fall of DR.

We want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude for the generous support you extended to us during a very important and challenging season. Your decision to help us cover our outstanding debts was truly timely. We want you to know that your support lifted a tremendous weight from our shoulders. We are now able to move forward without the same level of financial stress and with a renewed sense of peace and freedom to focus on the ministry God has entrusted to us. We truly believe your decision to stand with us was not only generous, but deeply meaningful and timely. Your support came at a moment when we needed it most, and we pray that you will always know how much of a difference it made.

We are working diligently to steward every dollar wisely and responsibly. We do not take your generosity lightly. We are committed to using every resource entrusted to us with prayer, careful planning, and accountability, making sure that every dollar serves the purposes for which God has provided it. Your support is also allowing us to continue responding to urgent needs within our community. At this particular time, many immigrant families are facing an extremely difficult reality. Many are afraid to leave their homes because of the current immigration situation and, as a result, are unable to work and provide for their families.

Through the church, we have been able to provide food rations to many of these families. What may seem like a simple bag of groceries represents much more: it means food on the table, relief for a mother who is worried about her children, and a reminder to a family living in uncertainty that they are not forgotten. But we are also discovering that the impact of this situation goes much deeper than material needs.

Earlier this week, I felt prompted to speak spontaneously with a young man. At the time, I did not realize that the Holy Spirit was leading me to have that conversation. As we talked, I discovered that he was struggling with severe depression as a

From Esther Derolus (continued)

result of difficulties at home connected to the immigration-related stress his parents are experiencing. His parents are carrying tremendous fear, uncertainty, and pressure, and unfortunately, some of that pain and frustration is being unintentionally taken out on their children. These children are carrying emotional burdens that they should not have to carry alone. This experience reminded me once again that the ministry God has entrusted to us requires much more than providing food or education. We need to be present, to listen, to discern, and to recognize when someone is hurting beneath the surface.

We ask you to pray especially for us in this area. Please pray that the grace of the Lord will accompany us as we walk alongside these children, young people, and families. Pray that God will give us discernment, wisdom, compassion, and a deep reverence for Him as we minister to these very delicate situations. We do not want to respond simply from our own understanding. We want to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and faithful to God's Word, knowing when to listen, when to speak, when to intervene, and when to seek additional help.

Thank you for believing in this ministry, for trusting us, and for choosing to stand with us during such a significant season. Your generosity has brought financial relief, but even more importantly, it has helped create room for us to continue being present with people who are hurting. We are deeply grateful to have you standing with us. Please know that your investment is touching lives in ways that go far beyond what can be measured financially.

May the Lord richly bless you and your families for the way you have allowed Him to use you.

With heartfelt gratitude in Christ,
Pastor Tanis & Esther Derolus

Remember to turn your clocks back on Sunday, November 1st.

Exercise your right to vote on Tuesday, November 3rd.

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 8th following the Morning Service. We will be voting on New Officers, New Board Members and the Budget for 2027. Please come make your wishes known.

The Church Office will be closed on Friday, November 13th in observance of Veterans Day.

The Church Office will also be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 26 & 27 for Thanksgiving.

Twentieth Annual

Thanksgiving Day Dinner

November 26, 2026 Serving from 12:00 – 2:00 pm. First Baptist Church will be hosting the Wellsboro Area Thanksgiving Dinner. It is open to anyone who would like to join us for a free meal. We are looking for donations of both food and your time. Please begin to pray and be watching in the foyer for sign up sheets.

Please contact Deb Borden at 570-724-5879
or sign up in the foyer.

O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good. His love endures forever. Psalm 136:1

Poinsettias

In Memory or in Honor of a Loved One

If you would like to place a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one in the sanctuary, please notify the church office by **November 20th.** Please bring your poinsettia in by **November 27th**. The Decorating Committee will be displaying them on Sunday, **November 29th**, the first Sunday of Advent. Please place the poinsettias in the back room behind the organ.

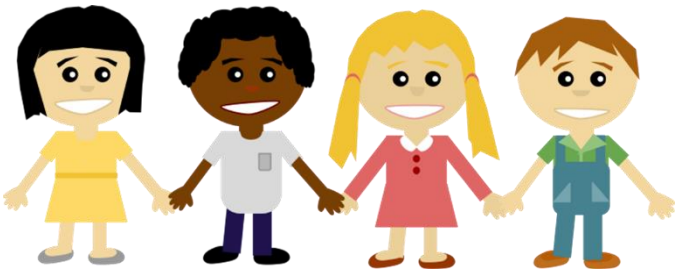
Please include a card or sticker with your name on it.

Christmas Decorating

Friday, November 27th, 2026

We need your help with decorating the Church and putting up the tree in the Sanctuary.

Anyone interested in helping
should be at the church at 9 am.



There will be no Kid's Club on

December 1st,

December 22nd and

December 29th

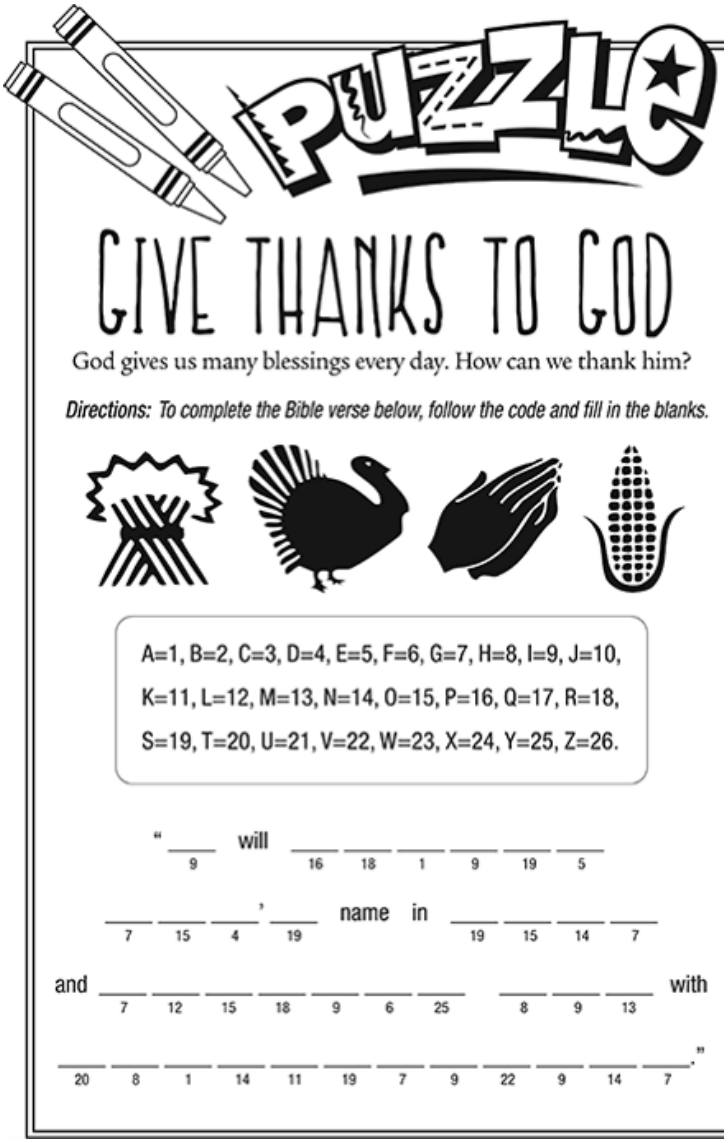
Due to the holidays and school closures.

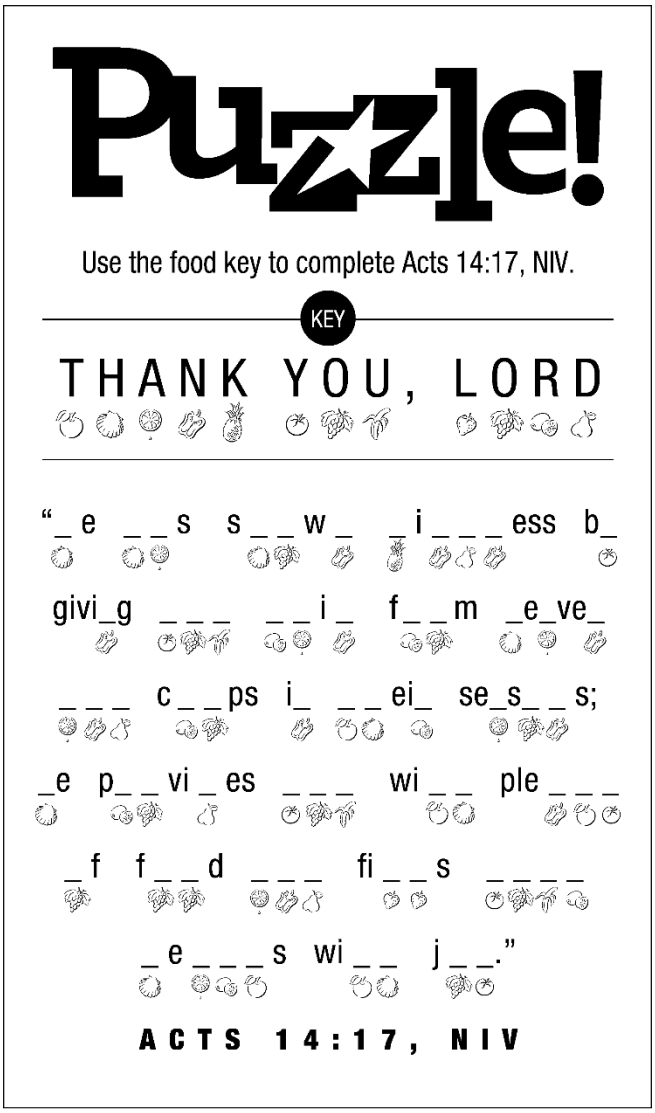
Our Deepest Sympathy

We express our deepest sympathy to:

Matt and Susan Strange, Susan's father Lee "Buzz" William Harvey passed away on October 4, 2026.

Kid's Puzzle Page





Answer: "He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." Acts 14:17, NIV

Hello Church Family,

Thank you for your patience as I learn how to use a different program to produce the News & Views going forward. The Volunteer page and Calendar will be separate from the newsletter for the time being.

Thank you for your understanding!

Blessings!

Sue Pratt

Church Secretary