

THE SPIRE

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 10

DECEMBER 2017



(Hi! This is Dorothy. Merry Christmas!! The story I've chosen is the origin of one of my favorite Christmas Carols.

In this issue you will also find a note from Dennis Croswell, Senior Elder, concerning interim preaching and pastoral duties; a note from the transition team concerning the pastoral search; a reminder about the giving tree; an advert for Breakfast with Santa; information about the contribution envelopes; the parsonage fundraiser; birthdays and great joy for Don Kent's 100th birthday.

Wishing you joy this holiday season. Peace.)

The Story of Silent Night, Stille Nacht

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Father Joseph Mohr, Parish Priest

The phrase repeats itself over and over again in his mind: "Silent night, holy night, Stille nacht, heilige nacht." It's the first line from a poem this young Austrian priest had written two years before. Now he can't get the phrase out of his mind. "Silent night, holy night."

Tonight is Christmas Eve and St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, north of Salzburg, will be chock-full of people. Father Joseph Mohr has a homily in mind, a message for his flock on this sacred night, but he needs a carol, something special to cap off the service.

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright...

The words won't go away. "I need a tune!" he says out loud, shaking his head. "I wonder if Franz can help me. I hope it's not too late." Franz Gruber is the schoolteacher in the nearby village of Arnsdorf — a gifted

musician, organist at the Arnsdorf church, and occasional substitute organist at St. Nicholas. "Franz will help me!" he says to himself. "He can't resist a musical challenge."

Franz Gruber, Schoolteacher and Organist

Quickly now he slings on his heavy coat, dons a fur cap and gloves, and ventures into the brisk December morning. The snow is crunchy underfoot as he makes his way across the churchyard towards Arnsdorf, just a 20 minute walk. "Silent night, holy night ... silent night, holy night." The rhythm of the words echoes with each step.

Elizabeth opens the door at his knock. "Father Mohr, how nice of you to stop by. Franz will be glad to see you." She takes his coat and ushers him in. Franz is picking something out on his guitar.

"Franz, remember that poem I told you about: 'Silent Night'?" says Mohr. "I know it's too late to ask, but could you help put a tune to it? I want to sing it tonight for Christmas Eve."

Gruber's face lights up. A challenge. A song. He takes the lyrics from the priest and begins to say them over and over, looking for a cadence. Then he hums a line and scratches it down.

Mohr soon tires of the process and begins to play with the children. But within an hour or so, Gruber seems to have a melody and is working out the chords on his guitar. "Father, how does this sound?" he calls and begins to sing the words:

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm all is bright...

He stops to make a correction in the manuscript, and then continues:

(go to page 2)

...Round yon virgin, Mother and Child,
 Holy infant so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace!
 Sleep in heavenly peace!

Father Mohr is ecstatic. On the second verse Gruber's deep voice is joined by Mohr's rich tenor. Elizabeth, baby on her hip, who has been humming along, now joins them on the last verse. The song fills their home with its gentle words and memorable melody.

New Year's Eve at St. Nicholas Church, Oberndorf, 1818

That night, December 24, 1818, the song fills St. Nicholas Church at Midnight Mass. Mohr sings tenor, Gruber bass, and the church choir joins the refrain of each verse, while Mohr accompanies on the guitar. By the time the last notes die away, the worshipers are a-buzz with joy and wonder at the song. On Christmas Day, the song is being hummed and sung in dozens of homes around Oberndorf. "Silent night, holy night."

And in Oberndorf, they would sing their beloved carol again and again each Christmas. The song might have stayed right there had it not been for an organ builder named Karl Mauracher, who came to repair the pipe organ at Arnsdorf in 1819 and made several trips to Oberndorf over the next few years, finally building a new organ for St. Nicholas in 1825.

The Song Finds Its Way to Emperors and Kings — and to America

Whether Mauracher found the music and lyrics on the organ or they were given to him by Gruber, we don't know. But he carried the song to the Ziller Valley east of Innsbruck, where he shared it with two local families of travelling folk singers, the Rainers and the Strassers, who began to sing it as part of their regular repertoire. The following Christmas of 1819, the Rainer Family Singers sang "Stille Nacht" in the village church of Fügen (Zillertal).

Three years later they sang it for royalty. Emperor Francis I of Austria and his ally Czar Alexander I of Russia were staying in the nearby castle of Count Dönhoff (now Bubenber Castle). The Rainer Family performed the carol and were invited to Russia for a series of concerts.

In 1834 the Strasser Family Singers sang "Silent Night" for King Frederick William IV of Prussia. He was so taken with what the Strassers called their "Song of Heaven," that he commanded it to be sung by his cathedral choir every Christmas Eve. It spread through Europe and in 1839 the Rainers brought the song to America as the "Tyrolean Folk Song." Since then it has been translated into over 300 languages and dialects.

Various English translations blossomed, but the definitive English version of the song was penned by Rev. John Freeman Young and first published in *The Sunday-School Service and Tune Book* (1863).

Why Is "Silent Night" So Popular?

Why has "Silent Night" become our most beloved carol? Is it the words — tender, intimate, gentle? Or the tune — so peaceful, so memorable, so easy to play or pick out with one hand on the piano?

It is not a joyous, fast-paced carol like Handel's "Joy to the World." Nor theologically-rich like Charles Wesley's "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." Nor does it have a complex tune like "Angels We Have Heard on High."

Rather, "Silent Night" is quiet and reflective, calling us to meditate on the scene. It is the ambience conveyed by both the gentle words and melody that create from this carol an oasis of peace.

"All is calm, all is bright."

It calls us to dwell on the Madonna and Child —

"Round yon Virgin, mother and Child,
 Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace."

You *feel* as the "shepherds quake at the sight." You can *imagine* as "heavenly hosts sing Alleluia." And you begin to sing "Alleluia to the King" right along with them.

Rays of backlit brilliance highlight many a religious painting, but here the picture of light is painted in words:

"Glories stream from heaven afar...."

"Son of God, love's pure light,
 Radiant beams from Thy holy face...."

Just Who is in this manger? What is the significance of this birth? What is Christmas about — really? Perhaps most of all, "Silent Night" is beloved because it reminds us in its simple, but exceedingly clear way, the truth behind it all — the truth that changes everything:

"Christ, the Savior is born!"

Sing it again this Christmas and let its gentle peace wash over you and its bold assertion renew your soul.

"Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

"Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!"

While the first few paragraphs of this story have been fictionalized, the historical events are true. Joseph Mohr (1792-1848) wrote the words to "Silent Night" in 1816 while priest at Mariapharr. On Christmas Eve 1818, he asked his friend Franz Gruber (1787-1863) to write the tune for Mass that evening at St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf where Mohr had been assigned in 1817. I've been careful to rely on recent historical research into the origin of the carol, much of it gathered since 1995, when a manuscript of the carol in Mohr's hand was found, dated 1820-1825. Some of the most helpful (and accurate) information sources are: Bill Egan's [Silent Night Museum](#), Egan's article ["Silent Night: The Song Heard 'Round The World."](#) ["Silent Night, Holy Night — Notes."](#) Hyde Flippo's ["Silent Night and Christmas,"](#) the [Stille Nacht Gesellschaft](#) by Manfred Fischer, director of the Silent Night Museum and Chapel in Oberndorf, Austria.

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Blessings & Holidays...

Holidays center around family.
Please come visit Stickley Gardens
and remember our family members
that have passed on to glory.
We too can find beauty and peace,
even in layers of snow.
Come, dust off a bench and
find the love and serenity here.

STICKLEY GARDENS

FOR MORE INFORMATION - CONTACT ANY OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

LISA LONGTO (331-1438) CHAIRPERSON
JIM FIRRO (383-0079) TREASURER
ESTHER STICKLEY (331-2919)
SANDIE GREGORY (338-7626)
LINDA DIDD, CONSISTORY LIAISON
REV STICKLEY, SECRETARY

A SACRED PLACE OF BEAUTY AND CONTEMPLATION.
(LOCATED ON THE SOUTH LAWN OF THE CHURCH)

DECEMBER EVENTS

December 3	Prayer Chain
December 10	Cookie Walk
December 11	Consistory
December 13	Social Solos
December 16	Breakfast with Santa
December 24	Christmas Eve Service
December 25	Christmas
December 31	New Year's Eve



December 16, 2017

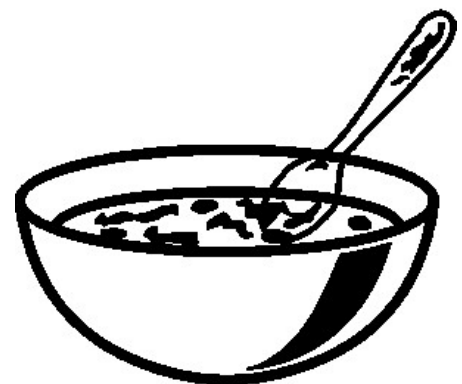
9 am – 11 am

Schadewald Hall

Reservations Needed

Call the Church Office 331-4121

SOUP: DECEMBER 3, 2017



The Soup Elves are working overtime!

This month's soup is Minestrone.

\$7/quart

December

Birthdays

Coty Burgess	2	Linda Moon	16
Toni Hedges	2	Delaney Cox	17
Pat Baker	4	Reid Dumas	20
Micaela Ryan	5	Mary Lou Vogt	20
Thomas Horvers	5	Brian Rafferty	22
Bailey Kane	5	Kathleen Pfeiffer	23
Hal Hauck	6	Don Kent	25
Caitlin Decker	7	Jim Prentice	27
Joyce Ann Leverenz	7	Bill Baldinger	27
Brent Jordan	11	Lia Sumerano	28
William Rockwell	11	Megan Christiana	28
Renee Nekos	11	Frieda Constant	29
Rich Little	11	Dawn O'Brien	29
Jezmain Hubbard	12	Judy Horvers	30
Jennifer Mayfield	14	Jada Nekos	30
Lauren Rubino	16	Alyson Rafferty	31

Daniel Waligurski 31

Anniversaries

December	
Nancy & Rick Salzmann	15
Barbara & Jim Mayfield	19
Steve & Kristen Helm	21
January	
Rev Charles & Esther Stickley	2
George & Renee Nekos	4
Tom & Ruth Harkin	6



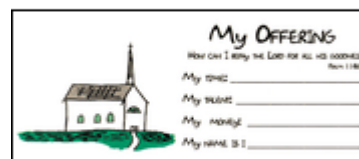
THE GIVING TREE:

The Giving Tree is up and full of tags for you to pick & purchase the item(s) on the tag & return them unwrapped to

the tree on or before December 10. This year we have adopted 5 families plus will be helping out Meyer School nurse in the needs that come into her office. A wrapping gathering will be held after church on Dec 17.

Please bring your scissors, scotch tape & let Lisa Longto that you will be able to help out. If you have any questions please see Lisa Longto or Sandy Emrich. Thank you for support!!

2018 OFFERING ENVELOPES will be available beginning December 3, 2017.



GUEST MINISTERS FOR DECEMBER

December 3: Rev. Nick Miles

December 10: Rev. Nick Miles

December 17: Rev. Charles Stickley

December 24: Rev. Charles Stickley

Christmas Eve Services: Rev. Charles Stickley

December 31: Rev. Charles Stickley

DURING THIS TIME FRAME WITHOUT AN ONSITE MINISTER, Reverends Titus (Red Hook), and Van Houten (Fair St.) as well as Rev. Stickley have offered their services to provide pastoral care (home/nursing home/hospital visitations) or any other ministerial needs of our congregation. If you are in need of such care, please contact Dennis Croswell (331-5944), Dorothy at the church office (331-4121) or the Deacon of the month as listed in the weekly bulletin.



The Missions committee has donated to our community and outreach missions in 2017. The list is as follows:

January - Food Bank of the Hudson Valley - \$\$350 (local)
February - Deacon's Fund - \$450 (local)
March - Walk for Water - \$800 (outreach)
April - Summer Bag Lunch (People's Place) - \$700 (local)
May - Youth Group for trip - \$300 (local)
June - Shelter Kids - \$450 (local)
July - Hospice of Hudson Valley - \$350 (local)
August - Samaritan's Purse (outreach)
September - Salvation Army - \$450 (outreach-hurricane victims, etc.)
October - Clinton Ave. Warming Center - \$500 (local)
November - Drs. Without Borders - to be collected
December - Family of Woodstock - to be collected.

Also the Benevolences amount of \$1,800 was split between Reservoir Food Pantry, Caring Hands and Angel Food East, all local.

As a church and community, we can all be pleased with the contributions made this year to the many worthy charities. The needs get greater and more desperate every year.

Marilyn Lowe, Chair
Rebecca Masters, Deb Tucker, Linda Caddy and Lee Gable.



O Come, Let Us Adore Him

You and Your family are invited to join us to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in our Christmas Eve Services:

7:00pm - *A service of Carols and Candles to welcome the Light that comes in the Christ Child*

9:00pm - *We celebrate His birth with a service of Carols, Candles, and Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

Experience the Wonder in the beauty of the season

as we join together in the sanctuary to welcome Him

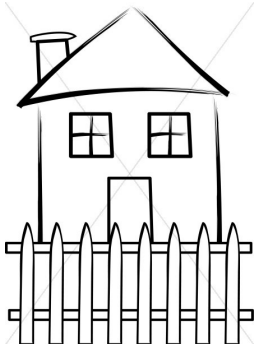
as the Babe of Bethlehem who comes to give us joy and peace, this night and all year long.



MINISTER UPDATE:



After review of candidate profiles and interviews, the search/transition team's preferred candidate made a visit to the area on the weekend of November 10-12. During that time, the search committee met with the candidate and his family, and watched him preach in a neutral church. After the service, the search committee and the candidate were in agreement to continue the process, which included a meeting with the finance committee chair and Sr. Elder to discuss the financial benefit package we were willing to offer. Those meetings resulted in an agreement to further the process which includes the candidate preaching before the congregation for the purpose of determining the desire to offer a call. We are pleased to announce that Rev. William Appleyard- Pekich will preach before our congregation on January 14, 2018 and that a congregational meeting will be held immediately after service to determine the congregation's desired direction for the Consistory. Informal meetings with the various organizations within the church and the candidate are being considered to be held prior to the service (most likely on Saturday) to provide an opportunity to meet and ask questions. A signup sheet for these meeting will be provided in the near future.



SPECIAL PARSONAGE RENOVATION FUNDRAISER 2017: As the transition team/search committee continues the process and in an effort to attract a new "call" minister, a number of renovation projects have been or will be undertaken at the parsonage. These projects include refinishing the living and dining room wood floors, replacement of flooring in the upstairs hallway, master bedroom, laundry and rear sun rooms, carpeting on stairs, re-pointing of all three chimneys, plumbing repairs, roof repair and painting. The total cost for these projects is estimated to exceed \$10,000. In an effort not to deplete the Church's saving account, we are initiating a special parsonage renovation fundraising program. We ask for your support in this endeavor by identifying your donations as "Parsonage Renovation Project." Thank you again for your generous support.

Hurley Reformed Church, Contacts, Hurley Reformed Church

Dec 2017 (Eastern Time)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10am - Worship @ 11am - Prayer Chain	9:30am - Guild 11am - Basket Class 3pm - Quilting @ 5pm - Dog Training 7:30pm - Al-Anon @	9:30am - Badminton 11am - balance 1pm - Women's 4:30pm - PC 101 @ 7pm - Boy Scouts	7:30am - Bible 5:30pm - Dog 7pm - Boy Scouts	9:30am - Badminton 1:30pm - Hurley 4:45pm - Dog 6pm - English as a 7pm - Choir 7pm - Sisters in 7:30pm - 1st Capitol	cookie walk setup @ 10am - Genealogy @	3pm - emma's
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
10am - Worship @ 11am - cookie walk 11am - Women's	9:30am - Guild 11am - VFW @ 3pm - Quilting @ 5pm - Dog Training 7pm - Consistory @ 7pm - Hudson Valley 7:30pm - Al-Anon @	8:30am - Hillside 9:30am - Badminton 11am - balance 7pm - Boy Scouts	7:30am - Bible 12pm - social solos 5:30pm - Dog 7pm - Local 1582 @	9:30am - Badminton 4:45pm - Dog 6pm - English as a 6pm - nursery 7pm - Choir 7pm - Sisters in	8am - Breakfast 5pm - swing dance	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
10am - Worship @ 11am - SHD	9:30am - Guild 10am - Genealogy @ 3pm - Quilting @ 5pm - Dog Training 7:30pm - Al-Anon @	9:30am - Badminton 11am - balance 1pm - Women's 7pm - Boy Scouts	nursery school 7:30am - Bible 9am - Finance 5:30pm - Dog 7pm - Hurley Lions 7pm - men's group	9:30am - Badminton 4:45pm - Dog 6pm - English as a 7pm - Choir 7pm - NE 7pm - Sisters in		
24	25	26	27			
Christmas Eve 10am - Worship @	Christmas 7:30pm - Al-Anon @	9:30am - Badminton 11am - balance 7pm - Boy Scouts	7:30am - Bible 5:30pm - Dog	9:30am - Badminton 4:45pm - Dog 6pm - English as a 7pm - Choir 7pm - Sisters in		
31	1	2	3	4		
10am - Worship @						

My dear Christmas

December 2017

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Pastor

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THE SPIRE
DECEMBER 2017

