



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

441 Pine Street, Williamsport PA 17701

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THE PINE NEEDLE – DECEMBER 2023

*God rest you merry gentlemen
Let nothing ye dismay
Remember Christ our Savior
Was born on Christmas Day
To save us from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray*

*Oh, tidings of comfort and joy
Comfort and joy
Oh tidings of comfort and joy*

Since we're focusing on the messages of our familiar Christmas carols this advent, it seems an appropriate time to discuss the "Christmas Comma Controversy!"

Comma placement may seem like something only your high school English teacher would care about, but it can make a huge difference in meaning. "Let's eat Grandma" has a very different meaning than "Let's eat, Grandma" Humorous, yes, but what does this have to do with Christmas?

The Christmas Comma Controversy swirls around "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen." Proper punctuation demands a comma, but where? (The comma was intentionally withheld in the previous example) Should it be "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen" or "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen?"

The issue comes down to the word "merry." According to Webster's dictionary "merry" means: full of gaiety and high spirits. The issue in this case is not so much what it means, but rather in what it describes. Put the comma before "merry" and it becomes an adjective describing the gentlemen. Put it after "merry" and it becomes an adverb describing "rest." So where does it go?

Most of us modern readers are inclined to think of "merry" as an adjective describing the gentlemen. It may not be a word that we use often, but that's how we are used to hearing it used. Merry Christmas (May your Christmas be Merry). Robin Hood's Merry Men (the jolly band of outlaws who hang out with Robin Hood.) Someone might even "go along their merry way" (to proceed in a carefree manner). When placed here the carol reads as if the gentlemen in question are filled with holiday cheer and after a night of exuberant Christmas caroling need good rest.

But, is that the best way to read the carol? Not really. You see, "merry gentlemen" are not being invited to rest, as in take it easy. Instead, a group of gentlemen are being invited to "rest merry." That strikes our ears as odd, but "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" is an old carol dating back to most likely the 1500's. Not quite as old as "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," but still a pretty impressive feat. And in the 1500's "to rest merry" meant

“may God grant you peace and happiness' We see it used this way in Shakespeare’s play As you Like It (written somewhere around 1590: “God rest you merry, sir.”

So it seems that rather than suggesting some particularly carefree gentlemen are in need of a break, the song instead is suggesting that peace and happiness are found in Christ. The gentlemen can stay (another meaning of the word rest) joyful because Christ was born on Christmas day and saves us from Satan’s power.

Erik Raymond writes, “Again and again, the song acknowledges our tendency towards discouragement and points us to the person and work of Christ. I think the hymn-writer wants to make us happy in God. He does this by reminding us of the kindness that ordered and accomplished the incarnation, as well as the success of the mission itself. . . .The human heart is often weighed down, and we know that many struggle with seasonal depression. But amid and even despite the sadness that comes from this cursed world we can be made joyful. The tidings of comfort and joy (the good news of the gospel) is the grounds by which God can “rest” us in joy.”

So, my friends, be careful where you put the comma. Do you simply want a good night's sleep after partying hard? Or do you long for the peace and joy that Christ alone can bring?

May God rest us all merry this holiday season.

Pastor James

FYI.... If you receive a text or email stating Pastor James is asking for gift cards (for any reason)...IT IS SPAM! JUST DELETE!



Leadership Team Update (11/15/23)

ACTION ITEMS

- Approved Foundation Committee grant requests \$2500 to WECC and \$500 to American Resue Workers for Saving Grace

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Discussion about custodial position opening and accepted resignation from Charlie
- Pastor James gave a Charge Conference briefing
- Discussion of 2024 budget planning
- Further discussion on Faxon/Kenmar, update Leadership on future steps

Please keep the Leadership Team in your prayers as they seek to serve both Christ and his Church.

- ☐ Pray for members of the Leadership Team to gain wisdom from the Word.

- ☐ Pray for members of the Leadership Team to speak boldly on behalf of the Lord.
- ☐ Pray for members of the Leadership Team to have perseverance and courage during difficult times.
- ☐ Pray for members of the Leadership Team to honor God in all their decisions.
- ☐ Pray for members of the Leadership Team to have patience with members of the church.
- ☐ Pray for members of the Leadership Team to lead their congregation on a godly path of righteousness.



Fellowship & Refreshments

We invite you to join us following the Sunday morning worship service for some fellowship & refreshments. **We want to get to know you!** And if you would like to provide refreshments (homemade or bought) any Sunday, please contact Gail Maurer at 570-419-4781.

OFFICE HOURS–

Monday - Thursday – 8 AM – 2:30 PM

Friday – 8 AM – 12 PM

Special Holiday Office hours:

Dec 25th – Christmas Day – CLOSED

Dec 26th – Dec 29th – CLOSED ALL WEEK (Phone messages will be checked daily & frequently)

Jan 1st – New Year's Day – CLOSED

****Regular office hours will resume on Tuesday, January 2, 2024**

See us on the web and on Facebook <http://www.pinestreetumc.org>

Worship Schedule

10AM Worship

10AM Children's Program

STAYING CONNECTED

RADIO SERVICE: You can tune in at **9AM** for our previous week's service on WHPA 1340AM and 101.7 FM

Not able to make it to in-house worship? You are able to join us by **"Live Stream."** The links will be found in the weekly email, on our Facebook page each week or go to www.pinestreetumc.org



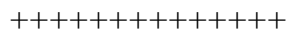
Family Promise Week: Dec 3rd – Dec 9th. We will again be providing meals for the families at Family Promise. Are you available and able to make a meal, order a take-out meal or provide the ingredients for a meal (they can cook for themselves)? Contact Lisa @ 570-323-4604 to pick your date. Next Family Promise week: **Jan 28th – Feb 3rd, 2024.**

New Church Directory: We will be putting out a new church directory for 2024. **Please take a minute to contact the church office to make any necessary changes.** If you are aware of anyone who wishes to STOP receiving mail from Pine Street, please let us know. New directories will be available in late January.

Let's buy toys!!! Our Collection Box still has room. During December, we will continue collecting toys for foster children through Dwell. Often families are notified at the last minute there is a child in need of care and have little time to prepare. Our toys will allow a child to pick an item or two to take with them to their new surroundings. A collection box is located in the lobby. Contact the church office with any questions.

John Bower Sunday School Basketball League: There is still time to sign up to play in the John Bower Sunday School Basketball League. The league will be holding registrations at the Curtin Intermediate School gym, Eldred and Packer streets, on Dec. 9 and 16 on this schedule: Beginner peewees from 9 to 10 a.m., peewees from 10 to 11, midgets from 11 to noon, juniors' noon to 1 p.m. and seniors from 1 to 2 p.m. Parents must accompany the child to sign the registration forms. There will be an open gym during those hours for each age group. Basketballs will be provided. Registration forms are also available in the church office. Entrance to Curtin is from the east side where there is parking. The league will work to find teams for those who register.

200TH ANNIVERSARY: Pine Street will be celebrating our 200th anniversary in 2026. If you would be interested in being part of the team that helps plan our anniversary celebration, please contact Pastor James.



ON THE CALENDAR FOR December @ PINE STREET

Dec 6th **United Women in Faith Christmas Program, 1:30 p.m. in the Narthex**

Dec 11th **Food Bank, 1 p.m.-3 p.m., Wahoo Dr., Williamsport**

Dec 13th	Leadership Meeting, 6:30 p.m. in the lobby
Dec 17th	Christmas Cantata, 10 a.m. Meal following the service
Dec 22nd – Jan 2nd	YMCA Child Care in Wesley Hall
Dec 24th	Christmas Eve Services, Family Worship Service 10 a.m. @ Pine Street UMC Christmas in the Park, 5 p.m. @ Short Park, Loyalsock Lessons & Carols by Candlelight, 8 p.m. @ Pine Street UMC
Dec 25th – Jan 1st	Merry Christmas & Happy New Year – Church office CLOSED
Dec 30th	Open Dance, 7 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Dec 31st	New Years Eve. Family Worship Service, 9:30 a.m. (Note time change)
Dec 31st	Noon Years Eve, Family event, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Jan 1st	Happy New Year 2024 – Church office CLOSED

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## **UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH**

Dec 6<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 p.m. UWF Christmas Program in the Narthex. Marion Reeser and Pat Wittig will be hosting.

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### *Community events and dates of interest*

**You are invited...to attend the Williamsport Music Club's annual Christmas Music by Candlelight program, Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 4 p.m., Pine Street UMC. Marilyn Burget & Kay Huffman are serving as co-chairs. A free will offering will go to the American Rescue Workers.**

**West Branch Chorale presents "We Need A Little Christmas", Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> @ 3:00 p.m. at Pine Street UMC. Free admission/Donations accepted. Pianist: Kristin Ivers**

*Thank you...*

TO EVERYONE, FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO!! We are so blessed. ~ Someone who notices

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PRAYER CHAIN UPDATE

Our Prayer Warriors are available for you! Prayer requests may be submitted to **Marilyn Kern** at (570) 323-7814 or pennstate326@aol.com, or **Pat Wittig** at (570) 322-4330, placed in the offering plate or directly to the church office (office@pinestreetumc.org).

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2 NIV

WAYS TO SUPPORT PSUMC FINANCIALLY

As Pine Street prepares for a new year, it is important to know what support we can depend on from our congregation members. By knowing what you are willing to commit financially, we are able to better plan for the future. Please consider setting up a recurring giving plan. Automating your financial commitments means your contributions will be received on a steady, uninterrupted basis.

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2024 HAVE ARRIVED. THEY WILL BE AVAILABLE BEGINNING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH.

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

Green offering envelopes are available for those who wish to use them. And as always, cash or checks may be given. Some may also wish to mail in their offering to the church office.

January PINE NEEDLE

Please have any material for the **January Pine Needle** in the church office no later than **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22ND**. If possible, please send all articles to the church via email or provide a typed copy.

NOTE: The January Pine Needle will be arriving late.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
10am - Worship 3pm - Wmspt Music	3 6pm - AA Meeting WH 7pm - BSF (Bible Study)	4 6pm - AA Meeting WH 7pm - BSF (Bible Study)	5 10:30am - Weight 1:30pm - UWF Christmas 6pm - Weight Watchers	6 7pm - Choir	7 3pm - Kerstetter Funeral	8 8am - C&Y Foster Care
9 10am - Worship 3pm - West Branch	10 1pm - Food Bank Packing 6pm - AA Meeting WH 7pm - BSF (Bible Study)	11 1pm - Food Bank Packing 6pm - AA Meeting WH 7pm - BSF (Bible Study)	12 10:30am - Weight 6pm - Weight Watchers 6:30pm - Leadership	13 7pm - Choir	14 7pm - Choir	15 7pm - Choir
16 10am - Christmas	17 6pm - AA Meeting WH	18 6pm - AA Meeting WH	19 10:30am - Weight 6pm - Weight Watchers	20 7pm - Choir	21 YMCA School-Age	22 YMCA School-Age
23 10am - Family Worship 5pm - Christmas in the 8pm - Lessons & Carols	24 Church Office CLOSED	25 Christmas Day 6pm - AA Meeting WH	26 YMCA School-Age 10:30am - Weight 6pm - Weight Watchers	27 YMCA School-Age 10:30am - Weight 6pm - Weight Watchers	28 YMCA School-Age 7pm - Choir	29 7pm - Open Dance
30 8pm - YPAA New Year's Event 9:30am - Worship - Note	31 Church Office CLOSED New Year's Day 6pm - AA Meeting WH	1 YMCA School-Age	2 YMCA School-Age 10:30am - Weight 6pm - Weight Watchers	3 7pm - Choir	4 7pm - Choir	5 7pm - Choir
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PINE STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

441 Pine Street
Williamsport PA 17701



DECEMBER 2023



Pine Street United Methodist Church

Our Vision

Show Christ's Love

Teach God's Truth

Share the Gospel

How is God calling you to fulfill our vision?

Have you checked out the website for Pine Street? www.pinestreetumc.org

Check out Pine Street UMC Facebook page

Witnessing to our faith and serving Christ in our Community