

**Valley Forge UMC Vision Statement**

*We are a Christ-centered community learning and striving to make our faith a way of life as we share with each other and all people the love, acceptance and forgiveness lived and proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth.*



# Open Door Tidings

*From the Pastor*

## ***Important issues for 2019— forgiveness, relationships, values***



Dear Friends,

I'm sitting at my desk in Ocean City thinking about the new year. Not knowing what to anticipate with my journey, there are decisions to be made about how I want to live my days. That is, what do I want to do with the rest of my life? I would like to suggest that each of us would do well to ponder this crucial question.

Thinking about our life is important. It allows us to be intentional about our living. The process encourages us in our authenticity. We can, if we choose to, make changes in our activities and behavior that will be more self-fulfilling and contribute to the common good. Commitment, discipline and desire are essential in making significant changes. We want to start small and then enlarge our orbit of anticipated change. We remember that miracles do not happen overnight.

As Christian people, there are many issues to contemplate. Let me suggest three that I believe will permit us to live with more inner peace and coveted joy.

Can I forgive myself and others?

Are relationships my ultimate priority—with God and others?

Am I living gospel values?

I intend to preach on these questions in the days ahead. The answers we provide after honest self-inquiry can provide the impetus for a fulfilling life in Christ and for a grounded trust that will enable us to live with harmony and celebration.

Hope your new year is filled with good health, love and laughter.

Blessings and Peace,

Jim Hallam, Pastor

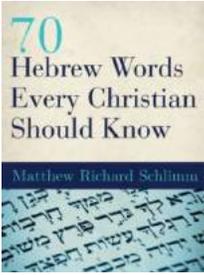


**Inside this issue:**

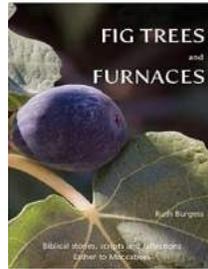
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# Adult Sunday School—9 a.m.

Tom Loane's SS Class



Double Feature



In 2019 our class will have two parts each week for variety.

### Part 1 - English isn't God's first language.

"Hallelujah, shalom, amen ... " these words roll off our tongues in Christian worship and conversation with little thought as to the richness and range of meanings in Hebrew. We will explore 70 words in Hebrew every Christian should know, taking a few words each week and seeing how they fit in scripture.

**Part 2 - Bible Stories for Adults** - As children we probably read numerous Bible stories such as Noah and the Ark. What we didn't read was a story of Noah's discovery of wine and the consequences of that discovery. Our first story will be the very complex tale of Jonah. What is the author telling us about the responsibility of Israel and by connection our responsibility?

Join us Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. to share in this presentation and discussion. You can drop in at any time and still participate. Bring your Bible.



Tom Loane



# An "Open-Bible" Adult Sunday School Class— Carrying on Scottie's Class

Billy Graham once noted that why the Bible remains a closed book to many is that we don't realize how much we need it. We need physical food in order to survive. Yet many Christians are spiritually starved because they ignore the spiritual "food" God has provided in the Bible. How can the Bible be part of your life?

Learn the Bible from others, for example, in group Bible studies. Learn the Bible on your own: come to the Bible joyfully, prayerfully and expectantly, systematically, thoughtfully, and obediently ("Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." [James 1:22])

We continue our study in the Gospel of John. All (any age!) are invited to join us to dig in the written Word and to learn more of the living Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. Come whenever you can!

The time: 9:00 to 9:55 a.m. The place: the church parlor. Bring your Bible; also we have extra Bibles in the class.

Bob Erb



### Scripture of the Month

For January the special *Scripture* is:

*"Let love be genuine . . . hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. . . . serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer."*

*Romans 12:9-12*



## January Lectionary



**January 6 – Epiphany of the Lord**  
Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14  
Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12

**January 13 – Baptism of the Lord**  
Isaiah 43:1-7 Psalm 29  
Acts 8:14-17 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

**January 20 – Second Sunday After the Epiphany**  
Isaiah 62:1-5 Psalm 36:5-10  
1 Corinthians 12:1-11 John 2:1-11

**January 27 – Third Sunday After the Epiphany**  
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a Luke 4:14-21

## January Birthdays



Patty Torres	6
Beth Lishon	8
Audrey Jamieson	8
Brett Vitale	12
Beth Cooke	18
Lorelai Dorrin	20
Susan Brown	22
Jennie Dishong	25
Pastor Jim	27
Bob Erb	30

## Anniversaries

None

### Tai Chi at Valley Forge UMC

November Tai Chi Classes:

January 5  
January 12  
January 19  
January 26



If you are interested in joining the class,  
call Maggie Horosky at 610-343-1343.

## Holiday Meals/Gifts delivered



Leslie and I want to thank all who donated food and gifts for our adopted families. It was worth all the time, effort and resources just to see the smiles on the faces of our families. Those expressions were priceless. I find this part of the holiday season to be the most heart-warming and appreciative time. Thank you to everyone who donated to the adopted-family cause. Our adopted family projects were completely successful!

*Fern Heit*

## Worship Participation Schedule

	Refreshments	Liturgist	Greeter
1/6	L. Davis	D. Erb	F. Heit
1/13	M. Younger	R. Masters	S. McClellan
1/20	L. Gular	G. Frazer	T. & R. Johnston
1/27	M. Horosky	J. M. Rich	L. Austin
2/3	B. Lishon	T. or N. Loane	R. Coroniti

### Note of Caution:

The schedule may be changed due to members' scheduling issues. The most up-to-date version of the Schedule is the weekly Bulletin.

**Notice:** Congregation member **Linda Ludwig** has a business which provides *Senior Companion Care and Pet Sitting*. Linda is willing to help other members of the congregation with her knowledge and compassion. **Phone: 610-906-0774.**

## *Deciding on priorities takes some thought*

Life can be confusing sometimes. There are so many thoughts that come into our minds—stuff we hear in the news—statistics about this sport or that sport (especially if we're Eagles fans)—relationship issues—and then there are the bills we just incurred for the holidays. What do we do first? What takes priority?

Yesterday (Sunday, 1/6), a friend and I took down his Christmas tree. Several years ago, he had bought an artificial, pre-lighted tree. Unfortunately when he had put up the tree, none of the “pre-lighted” lights worked, so he decided to just put up new strings of lights over the ones that wouldn't work. When I saw this, I investigated a little more closely and saw that the lights had not been glued onto the tree but that they could be removed. So when we started to take down the tree and had removed all the ornaments and the new strings of lights, we started to remove the ones that wouldn't light.

When we began this process, we realized that every little light had been attached separately by a plastic-covered metal “twisty,” the things you use to tie the plastic bag with a loaf of bread inside to keep it fresh. At this point we didn't know how many lights were on the tree, we just dug in. For a while I untwisted by hand. But my fingers get beat up enough in the cold weather, gloves on and off dealing with bus switches. So finally I got the scissors out of the drawer and started snipping. My friend was thinking the same thing, so he went for his hand-held metal cutters (He has every tool known to man.).

*More than three hours later* (after the Eagles' game had started) we finished removing the lights. There were seven strands, each with 50 lights—the math is—350 lights, each untied or snipped. Then, of course, I had to plug in each strand, and guess what? They all lighted, every single strand!

So what was this??!! Was it Murphy's Law of artificial, pre-lighted Christmas trees—if you remove the original lights because they won't light, then they'll light!!!?? Or was this just some anal retentive task that really didn't need to be done??

You're probably wondering what the point is. So am I . . . no, here it is.

The point is . . . **appreciation**. While my friend and I were untying and snipping, I said, “You know, someone had to put the lights on this tree one by one. This can't be done by machine.” My friend said, “Yes, I was thinking the same thing. That's probably why it cost so much!!”

But there's something in there about appreciation. When pre-lighted Christmas trees really work, and each ornament has been meticulously placed, they are beautiful—the center of attention when it comes to Christmas decorations. And think of it—someone put the lights on that tree *one by one*. That took a lot of work and a lot of time.

My point can stretch a little further—when you get done reading what Pastor Jim wrote for page one of this newsletter, appreciation might be one of the next issues on your list. Appreciation of what others do for you, appreciation for what God has done for you and others, and appreciation for just finishing each breath you take.

Everyone figures out their own priorities. If you need to start a list, Pastor Jim gives us a good beginning in this newsletter. With our busy lives, the list could go on forever.

And somewhere, in a pre-lighted Christmas tree factory, I'm sure a bottle of hand cream is being appreciated.

*The Editor*

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## *Short Sayings*

### The Seven Deadly Sins

Pride—a high or inordinate opinion of oneself; exaggerated self-esteem; conceit; haughty behavior resulting from this.

Envy—a feeling of discontent or jealousy, usually with ill will, at seeing another's superiority, advantages or success.

Lust—uncontrolled or illicit sexual desire or appetite.

Greed—excessive, inordinate or rapacious desire, especially for wealth.

Sloth—habitual disinclination to exertion; indolence; laziness.

Anger—a strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence aroused by a real or supposed wrong; wrath; ire.

Gluttony—excessive eating or drinking.

*Medieval theologians*

I shall allow no man to belittle my soul by making me hate him.

*Booker T. Washington*

Submitted by Bob Erb

# JANUARY, 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <b>Happy New Year!</b>	2	3 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, 6:15 p.m.	4	5 Tai Chi 10:15 a.m.
	Jazzercise: Monday-Thursday at 6:15-7:15 p.m.; Saturday at 9-10 a.m. Wednesday & Friday: 9 a.m. Bible Study—Pastor Jim Choir—Julia Rich Bell Choir—Nancy Loane	8	9	10 11 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, 6:15 p.m.	11	12 Tai Chi, 10:15 a.m.
6 Sunday School, 9 a.m. Fellowship, 10 a.m. <b>Worship, 10:30 a.m.</b> <b>Communion</b>	7	15	16	17	18	19 Tai Chi, 10:15 a.m.
13 Sunday School, 9 a.m. Fellowship, 10 a.m. <b>Worship, 10:30</b>	14	22	23	24	25	26 Tai Chi, 10:15 a.m.
20 Sunday School, 9 a.m. Fellowship, 10 a.m. <b>Worship, 10:30</b>	21	29	30	31 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, 6:15 p.m.		
27 Sunday School, 9 a.m. Fellowship, 10 a.m. <b>Worship, 10:30 a.m.</b>	28 Administrative Board Meeting 7 p.m.					