

**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES**  
**MILLERSBURG FIRST AND CLARK COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN**  
**DECEMBER 2017**



**Pastor B's Corner: "Seasons of Change"**

*The following is the sermon I preached on November 27. It is based on Ecclesiastes 3:1-11.  
"Seasons of Change:" A Sermon on Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*

"For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven..." (Ecclesiastes 3:1). These words of Qoheleth, the speaker of the Book of Ecclesiastes, have rung in my heart and mind this week as I have pondered just what it means to see one season end and another begin—just what it means for there to be a "season and time for every matter under heaven."

When we hear the word season, so often we think of the four seasons of the year: Winter, More Winter, Still Winter, and Construction (the four seasons of Ohio) or as they are known in other places Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. When we think of seasons our mind pictures things like the changing of leaves from green to yellow, red, orange, and brown as summer becomes fall; we picture things like the bright green and yellow of daffodils pushing forth through the gray snow as winter becomes spring. We think of time and the passing of it as one season melds into another—as one year blends with the next and the next until we don't where the time has gone, but all we know is that it has gone too quickly.

In our passage for today, Qoheleth speaks of seasons and times under heaven: "a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:2-8). Old Testament scholar William P. Brown says this about Qoheleth's talk of seasons and time: "Each activity, whether positive or negative, has its season, and the seasons themselves have their place in the rhythm of the ever-circling years..." (Brown 2000, 41). Qoheleth's words are comforting: everything has its place in the rhythm of our lives under this sun, under the hand of God's care.

These seasons that Qoheleth points out as making up our lives—keeping and throwing away, tearing and sewing, loving and hating—are in themselves made up of smaller seasons, which too have their place in "the rhythm of the ever-circling years" (Brown 2000, 41). Between "a time to be born and a time to die" are a multitude of little seasons of our lives that are equally important: a time to hold our children and a time to let them go; a time to raise a family and a time to be empty-nesters; a time to work and a time to retire; a time to stay and a time to leave. Like summer becomes fall, sometimes these smaller seasons of our lives glide gently from one season to the next; sometimes like the explosion of the green of spring after a long, white winter, they end and begin abruptly—shocking us with the suddenness of it all.

The thing that Qoheleth doesn't tell us is that the change of the seasons in our lives brings with it a million different emotions: disappointment for what will not be done; fear of what the unknown may hold; sadness for the end of the season; excitement for what the new season holds. As you and I stand in the middle of a changing season—as the season of my pastorate ends and another begins for you and for me—I can tell you that I feel all the things I described and more: disappointment for the things that I thought were my call to do, but were not; sadness for the end of this season together with people I have grown to deeply love; excitement for what this new season in Carrollton, Georgia will hold and what this new season under a new pastor will hold for you—how she will bring you to that Promised Land I see for you, a place it wasn't my call to take you; a need to ask forgiveness for things that I have done and not done that have hurt you; anxiety about what this new season will hold. For you, the emotions may be different: happiness for us that we will be near our family again mixed with a little sadness to see us go; anxiety about what will happen next mingled with excitement for the future; anger because you will probably have to paint the Manse again because the next pastor may not like the teal walls in the master bedroom mixed with relief that God may bring you a pastor who likes gardening and yard work.

We don't go through the change of seasons without feeling something, and these feelings may not always bring out the best in us. Our anxiety in the time between seasons may make us act in ways we may not normally act—in ways that are not emotionally healthy. Anxious people and groups tend to direct all their anxiety on one person. They act this out by making snippy comments that normally wouldn't be made or talking behind that person's back instead of speaking to him/her directly. In the anxiety of a changing season, we, you and I, need to hold tight to the knowledge that amid this and every season God is present and in charge. In his discussion of seasons and times, Qoheleth points to a truth about life: Permanence is not part of the time we have on this earth—the *chronos* time which is measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days, years—but permanence is a part of God's indeterminate time—God's *kairos* (the opportune time in which everything happens). In a life of changing seasons, the one thing that doesn't change is that God is in charge. All time, all seasons, are in the hands of God, who provides for us.

Between now and January 7<sup>th</sup>, Baptism of the Lord Sunday, we will celebrate the time we have together and the time we have had. During this time, there will be good sermons and better sermons; there will be laughter and tears; there will be good-byes and hellos. But when the anxiety comes, when you begin worrying about what is going to happen if you don't have an interim pastor by February or I begin worrying about how in world James and I are going to get seven years' worth of accumulated junk packed by mid-January, you and I are going to stop, take a breath, and remember that permanence is not a given in these years we live. Seasons WILL change, but the good news is that the God, in whose hand they are held, doesn't change in His love, care, and provision for us. When we hold tight to that truth, we can face any changing season with hope and trust that just as God was in the season past, so God will be with us in this coming season.

Qoheleth wrote, "For everything there is a season, a time for every matter under heaven..." (Ecclesiastes 3:1). The beauty is that this time and every time is held firmly by God. Praise be to the one who holds us in his hands. Amen.

#### Works Cited

Brown, William P. *Ecclesiastes*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2000.

# In the Between Time

What will happen in the time between the ending of my pastorate and the calling of an interim pastor?

1. **Transition Team:** A Transition Team from Presbytery will meet with the joint session, which will be comprised of current elders and elders-elect, from Millersburg and Clark churches. The plan is for this team to meet with the joint session before I leave. This team will work with the session during the time between the ending of my call and the calling of a pulpit supply or interim pastor.
2. **Sunday Worship:** In January (following my last Sunday on the 7<sup>th</sup>), the pulpit will be filled by the Rev. Chris Stewart. Rev. Chris Stewart will also serve as the moderator of both sessions until an interim or installed pastor is called.
3. **Newsletters:** Shayla Fisher, who serves as secretary for both churches and Children's Ministry Director for Millersburg, will be putting together the newsletters. Until a new pastor (interim or otherwise) is called, newsletters will be published every other month: January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, November/December. All information is due to Shayla by the 21<sup>st</sup> of each month. Please email this information to her at the church email address: [mbgpres@gmail.com](mailto:mbgpres@gmail.com).
4. **Announcements for the Bulletin:** Any announcements for the bulletin must be sent to Shayla by Wednesday morning of each week.

Who will you contact should you need something, such as pastoral care, assistance, etc.?

1. **Emergency Pastoral Care:** Emergency pastoral care is defined as surgery, hospitalization, and death. If you need emergency pastoral care, please contact Rev. Chris Stewart at (330) 567-3210 (Home); (330) 347-3513 (Cell).
2. **General Pastoral Care:** General pastoral care is defined as home visits, shut-in visits, etc. If you or someone you know needs general pastoral care, they are to contact the following:
  - a. **Millersburg:** One of the Elders or Deacons (a list will be sent via email and will be published in the January Newsletter)
  - b. **Clark:** One of the Elders (a list will be published in the January Newsletter)
3. **General Questions or Requests for Assistance:**
  - a. **Millersburg:** Molli Money
  - b. **Clark:** TBD
4. **Homebound Communion:**
  - a. **Millersburg:**
    - i. Carole Norman
    - ii. Elaine Hand
    - iii. Sam Steimel
    - iv. Vicki Wile
  - b. **Clark:** One of the Elders

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS AT BOTH MILLERSBURG AND CLARK  
WILL BE HELD ON DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EACH  
WORSHIP SERVICE:**

There will be congregational meetings held at both Millersburg First and Clark Community Churches on December 10<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this meeting is twofold: first to elect officers and second to vote to dissolve the pastoral relationship effective January 28<sup>th</sup>. Please make all effort to attend.

**Please Note: Christmas Eve is on Sunday this year. The Sessions of both churches determined that we would hold two combined services on December 24<sup>th</sup>:**

10 AM @ Clark Community Presbyterian Church: Informal worship including a children's Christmas play.

7:30 PM @ Millersburg First Presbyterian Church: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion



**Children's Christmas Play:** This year we will be holding a Christmas play starring children from Clark and Millersburg Presbyterian Churches. Practice begins on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at Noon and will last approximately one hour. Practices will take place each Sunday at noon until the day of the program. The play will be held on December 24 at 10 AM at Clark Community Presbyterian Church as part of our Christmas Eve worship. Please come. Children of all ages are welcome.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service:** Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held at 7:30 PM at Millersburg First Presbyterian Church. Please come and attend this beautiful service as we celebrate the coming of our Lord.



# BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

## Millersburg

6 – Edward Braun  
7 – Racine Marcus Brown  
11 – Lindsey Bird Taylor  
11 – Nancy Irving  
15 – Jr. Vaughn  
16 – Janice Thomas  
20 – Lillian Rittenour  
20 – Kevin Vaughn  
21 – Brian Bricker  
22 – Chris Tuitama  
27 – Julie Parrish  
28 – Dustin Taylor  
29 – Terri Croskey  
30 – Carli Roach

## Clark

5 – Glendon Miller  
8 – Greg Wagers  
12 – Kenneth Conrad  
18 – Linda Scott  
22 – Tami Bucklew  
29 – Nikki Yoder

## MILLERSBURG FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWS

# In Loving Memory

### **SERVICE OF CELEBRATION FOR THE LIFE OF LARRY NEAL**

Larry Neal, member of the Millersburg Presbyterian Church , passed away on November 12 after suffering a stroke on November 6. He was 87 years old.

Larry lived his early years in Holmes County, lived in Middletown, Ohio during his employment years and returned to this area in retirement.

He and his wife, Helen recently celebrated 60 years of marriage. They joined the Millersburg congregation on May 26, 1996. Larry served on Session and also sang in the choir.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two daughters, Laura (Mark) Schmidt of Orrville and Julie (Tim) Cupka of Lebanon, IN and 12 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren, also two sisters, Elaine Landon and Marlene Purtan.

Funeral services were held on Wednesday, November 15 at the Millersburg Presbyterian Church with Pastor Kristy Buyok officiating. Burial was at the Killbuck Cemetery.

### **SERVICE OF CELEBRATION FOR THE LIFE OF AMY WILSON**

Amy Wilson passed away on Monday, November 13 at the age of 65 years after an extended battle with cancer.

She joined the Millersburg Presbyterian Church on March 28, 2010. She served as a Deacon and also sang in the choir.

She is survived by her parents, Jim and Delores Wilson, a sister, Roberta (Kevin) Mc Gregor of Bath, brothers, James Wilson of Akron and William Wilson (Jeanne Grove) of Missoula, MT and niece, Jaime McGregor.

Memorial services were held on Friday, November 17 at the Millersburg Presbyterian Church with Pastor Burnetta Armour officiating.

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR STAFF

Monetary gifts for the church staff will be received during December. Donations may be placed in the offering plates in an envelope marked for "Church staff" or they can be sent to the financial secretary, Tom Vaughn, 251 Port Washington Rd., Millersburg, OH. 44654. Please have all donations in by December 20.

# Upcoming Events

**DECEMBER 3 (Immediately Following Worship):** Luncheon, Hanging of the Greens, and Children's Christmas Play practice (downstairs)

**DECEMBER 10 (Immediately Following Worship):** Congregational Meeting to elect officers and vote to dissolve the pastoral relationship.

**DECEMBER 17 (During Worship):** Ordination and Installation of Officers

**DECEMBER 19 @ 6:30 PM:** Session Meeting

**DECEMBER 21 @ 5:30 PM:** Thursday Night LITE

**DECEMBER 24:**

**10 AM:** Combined Christmas Eve Service at Clark, featuring our Children's Program at Clark Community Presbyterian Church

**7:30 PM:** Combined Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service at Millersburg First Presbyterian Church

## Worship Participants for December

<u>Date</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Nursery</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
December 3	Nikki Roach	Tom and Laurie Vaughn	Kate and Dave Findley
December 10	John Estill	Volunteer	Tom and Junior Vaughn
December 17	Elaine Hand	Ruth and Kevin Vaughn	Garrett Roach and Tim Allison
December 24	Pastor Burnetta	No Nursery	No Ushers
December 31	Pastor Burnetta	Tom and Laurie Vaughn	Sam Steimel and Vicki Wile

## CLARK COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS



**DECEMBER 3 @ NOON:** Children's Christmas Play practice (Millersburg First Fellowship Hall)

**DECEMBER 10 (Immediately Following Worship):** Congregational Meeting to elect officers and vote to dissolve the pastoral relationship.

**DECEMBER 12 @ 7 PM:** Session Meeting

**DECEMBER 17 (During Worship):** Ordination and Installation of Officers

**DECEMBER 21 @ 5:30 PM:** Thursday Night LITE at Millersburg

**DECEMBER 24:**

**10 AM:** Combined Christmas Eve Service at Clark, featuring our Children's Program at Clark Community Presbyterian Church

**7:30 PM:** Combined Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service at Millersburg First Presbyterian Church

