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 Jackson Street Baptist Church

 1206 Jackson Street

 Scranton, PA 18504

 Phone: 570-346-1674

The High Spire

“A Going Church For A Coming Lord”

2016 – 1st Edition

** UPCOMING EASTER SERVICES**

 Special Presentation by Rev. Jim Hughes – Sunday February 28th 10:00 AM

 Holy Thursday Communion Service – Thursday, March 24th at 7:00 PM

 Easter Morning Resurrection Service – Sunday, March 27th at 10:00 AM

 Easter morning service will have music by “A Touch Of Brass”

** EVERY MEMBER ENLISTMENT**

 Congregational Proposed Budget Luncheon – March 13th at 11:15 AM

 Loyalty Sunday (Presentation of Pledge Cards) – April 10th

 The new offering envelopes will be available at the end of April.

 Boxed sets will be available for pick up in the rear of the church sanctuary.

 **Please make sure your address and phone numbers are up to date.**

The Search Committee meets most Monday evenings at 6:30 pm.  We ask that the church family unite with us in prayer each Monday as we meet.  Please pray for God's guidance as we seek our next pastor as the man God has already chosen for us. It has been a long process that began as we established a list of criteria which we compiled with the help of the questionnaire from the congregation.  With that information we put together a profile that we placed on 2 web sites and with the American Baptist Association.  We were very pleased with almost 100 applicants.  We have been prayerfully considering each one that fits the criteria we established.  We have Skype interviewed the top candidates, two of them a number of times.  With the abilities afforded us through the use of technology we can view their church web sites as well as listen to sermons on-line.  We know this process is slow and time consuming but we ask for your patience, as above all else, we seek to glorify God and be good stewards by a thorough interview process.  This past Monday evening the committee met with the joint board and presented a candidate to be considered as the next pastor for Jackson Street Baptist Church.  As we are getting closer to the goal we seek your prayers and will keep you informed as we progress.


 **Saturday Night Social**
 Our monthly Saturday socials have been an overwhelming success. Last year we averaged between 40- 50 members and friends from our church family. We have delighted in all the various pot luck dishes and of course, desserts. Some theme nights featured soups. We lined up 10 crock pots of different soups and it was so good trying each. Another popular night was pasta night. Friends shared their favorite sauce (again in the crock pots); with tossed salad, Italian bread and garlic knots. We did a few pizza nights and a wimpie and wiener night with all the fixings. The goal for our monthly social is to keep the fellowship and lines of communications open for our members. We have had Name that Tune Night, Jeopardy and Trivia Game Night. At Christmas time we gathered to decorate several trees for our church. Guest speakers are always enjoyed as well. Darla Dickson (mother of slain Pa State Trooper Bryon Dickson); was one of our favorites. She shared her message of healing despite her life changing events. We welcome new friends and meet the third Saturday of each month at 6 pm. We are always looking for new speakers or any fellowship activity. Please join us!



Our Women’s Union has been together for so many years and is still working hard making quilts for those who request them and to sell to help support White Cross for missions support. The women meet every Wednesday morning at 9:30 AM in the Social Room of the church to quilt and support one another through good and bad times. For those who do not quilt, the Teddy Bear project is still going strong supplying homemade bears to little ones who are going through difficult times in local hospitals and family programs as well in our area. If you would like to take part please feel free to join in any Wednesday morning, there’s always room for another quilter or you could help to work on the bear project!

 We’d like to thank all those who give of their time to be a Nursery Volunteer or a

 greeter Sunday mornings. It is a simple pleasure to be greeted by a smiling face and

 receive a bulletin when you first come into the church building. Our Nursery is

 available during the morning worship service for those who have little ones to

 utilize. Our gifted volunteers are always happy to take care of your little one while

 you enjoy the worship service. If you would like to volunteer to be a greeter or

 to help out in the nursery some Sunday, please call the church office.

Home Missions Committee continues to work together to help those in need and to provide support

to Christian groups in the area. We have recently enjoyed a visit from John and Debbie Coats, our

missionaries from Cambodia . John provided the sermon for the morning worship service and then

both he and Debbie gave us a look into their work in Cambodia at a highly attended luncheon that

followed the worship service that day. We plan to share news from our other missionary families

serving in Taiwan, England and Alaska in the future. Look for future updates in the new High Spire.

 The choir has been singing their praises to the Lord each Sunday during the morning worship service. We had a beautiful Christmas music program with “A Touch Of Brass” enhancing the day with their wonderful gifts of musical talent given to each and every one these musicians. We look forward to their return again at Easter for our Easter Resurrection Service. If you enjoy singing, please join us on Wednesdays at 7:30 PM in the annex of the church!



**The Greatest of all Loves**

*Written by Lori Saar Dunham*

We were in a harried rush. We had driven to Germany from our home at the Navy Base in La Maddalena Italy. It was on the way home that we decided we must stop off to see the Leaning Tower of Pisa. After all, how could we drive by one of the most iconic buildings in all of Italy, without at least catching a glimpse? We exited the autobahn and began meandering through the narrow streets of Pisa. We followed our map closely and eventually spied a sliver of the leaning tower between rustic buildings and billowing lines of laundry. It was still far off in the distance but we could clearly see the infamous slant of the tower. Minutes passed as we snaked our way through the narrowing streets of Pisa. It seemed as if we were in a maze that only went around the leaning tower, never toward it. Our map had no clear direction of getting to the tower. After precious minutes that turned into hours, we gave up hope of getting a closer look and turned back toward home.

This world likes to think they offer a blueprint of what love is and how to find true love in this lifetime. Just go into any bookstore and it will offer you step by step procedures and countless manuscripts on finding and keeping your perfect love. Despite what it may think, this world rarely offers us a clear path toward the greatest love. They send us on wild goose chases that leave us dizzy and unsatisfied as we search for a love we deeply desire. In the end, the world offers up a cheap imitation of the genuine love found when we seek the Creator of true love. The greatest love is not found at the bottom of a box of chocolates or in the sparkle of a new diamond. We look to the Word of God, where genuine love was birthed, and we find relief from the fake love this world offers us, finding true direction in Jesus’ words. “Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself”. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’” Matthew 22:37-40. This verse is a filter which all other actions must sift through.

Leaning all of who we are and hope to be toward Jesus. We direct our devotion to Him first and foremost, placing Him at the center of our whole hearts, and training our minds to think of Him first. When we tilt our hearts toward Him, we can stay when the world would tell us to leave. We can love when the world tells us to grab more. We can wait when the world tells us to jump. When we love Jesus with our whole hearts, souls and minds, we can love our people well. We can love the unlovable. We can pour out blessing on all of those around us because of His love in us.

When we seek to love the Lord our God with everything in us, His love will flow through us, guiding others to the most genuine, pure, steadfast love ….the love of Jesus Christ.

We never did get to stand at the base of that leaning tower. But in the end, it has acted as a gentle reminder, to lean close to Jesus and only then will we experience the greatest love of all.

**News from the LOA Sunday School Class.**

For the past month or so the topic our class been studying is "How to control our Tongues" by Karen Ehman.  Our class usually starts out with some discussion and then a short video is shown.   We all enjoy each other's company and once a month we join each other for lunch at one of the area restaurants.  Last month we were treated to a post Christmas luncheon hosted by Harriet Metzger.  The church social room was decorated beautifully and a wonderful lunch was served followed by games and a fun time.  This month's luncheon will be held at the All Aboard Diner on Cedar Avenue on Thursday, February 18th at 12 noon.  We are looking forward to a special series of Bible studies which will be presented to our class by Mike Burke starting sometime in April.  We extend an invitation to anyone who would like to participate in any of our activities.

**Christian Education News**

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,

for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

 **Easter Egg Hunt**

 The Christian Education Committee is looking forward to the Annual Easter Egg Hunt, which

will be held on Palm Sunday, March 20th, immediately following the morning worship service.

The event will begin in the front pews of the sanctuary as our puppet friends share the events of

the first Easter. Young children will hunt for brightly colored eggs while the older children will

participate in a Photographic Bible Scavenger Hunt and will receive eggs as they complete each

 task. The event will conclude in the church social room where all will enjoy snacks and receive

some surprises to take home. We will be collecting plastic eggs filled with candy should you wish

to help out. The eggs can be dropped off in the rear of the sanctuary.

**Bible Lessons Based on Kids' Favorite Cereals!**

**★ ★ ★ New For 2016 ★ ★ ★**

The commercials always tell us that cereal is a “part of a complete breakfast.” This series

 will show kids how, unlike cereal, Jesus is all we need to have a complete and joy-filled life.

This new once a month program will begin in April during the Sunday School Hour. More details to follow.



As many of you know Barbara and Donald Lake were the caretakers and creative force behind the High Spire of our church for many years. Donald and Barbara truly enjoyed doing this work and was an outreach for them in the church and worked well as there were times their health was not good. Throughout the years they dedicated much of their time to the High Spire, but then Donald was called home to the Lord. Although Barbara missed him dearly she kept his love of the High Spire alive and kept working on it herself. Barbara has moved this past year and with downsizing she just was not able to continue her work with the newsletter herself. As a thank you for all of hers and Donald’s hard work and dedication the church presented Barbara with a plaque and a check from the church to show their appreciation to them for their years of service to the church. Here is the letter Barbara sent to the church after the presentation:

Dear Friends,

 Paul and Carole Rae Asman came to my home and presented me with the plaque and check from the church. Thank you very much for this totally unexpected honor.

 When Don and I started doing the High Spire, we looked on it as an opportunity to serve God and the church by doing something we could easily handle – not physically hard, just mentally challenging. We loved doing it.

 When God saw fit to call Don home, I decided to continue the work myself because, even though I could not be present physically, it made me feel a part of the church community. I loved doing it.

 When I decided to move, I also decided to no longer do the High Spire, even though I loved doing it. It had just become too much for me.

 I pray that whoever takes over the High Spire loves doing it as much as we did. It was a blessing to be able to serve God and the church in such a special capacity.

 The word “love” appears in this note a lot, I know. There is no other way to express my feelings for Jackson Street Baptist Church, the High spire, and especially the wonderful people who are “JSBC”. You have enriched my life beyond my ability to communicate. Knowing you are there supporting my family in every way possible makes me know I am truly blessed. Thank you for your prayers and continued support. You are truly my beloved family.

 *Barbara Lake*