



First
Presbyterian
Church
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns - *Online.*

December 16, 2020 | Waynesboro, Virginia | *a newsletter supplement.*

I hate snow.

I recognize that may seem to be a precipitous statement (*precipitous*, HA! because snow = precipitation), but I have my reasons. Good reasons, which I shall now share with you.

First, *snow is cold*. I recognize this might seem obvious, but consider for a moment *my feet*.

For as long as I can remember, cold feet have been the one constant of winter, especially in the snow, which seems to be a thoroughly efficient conduction medium. Once my feet get cold, the beauty of a freshly fallen blanket of white quickly turns to a purple, *this little piggy went to the meat locker* experience. As someone who grew up refusing to button my jacket ever, for any reason, and who still tends to go without outerwear much of the time, this may seem hard to believe, but I ALWAYS wear something on my feet. Especially in the winter. Here's the cold, hard truth: thermal socks are a joke; insulated boots lie. I never tried those weird electric foot warmers because let's face it, live wires woven around my person sounds more like a torture method than a winter coping strategy. When it snows, my feet get cold, and I believe I am on firm, temperate ground when I say this: When your feet are cold, there is no joy in the world - Christmas or not.

continued below

COVID average Incidence Rate per 100,000
from the Virginia Dept of Health.

Augusta County:	167.9
Harrisonburg	53.7
Staunton	22.4
Rockingham	60.1
<u>Waynesboro</u>	<u>103.5</u>
Average/100K	81.5

Session will schedule in person worship when the incidence rate reaches 10 or less. For more information about incidence rates and their significance, click this link:

Click here to learn more about incidence:

**Covid
ActNow**



Hans Hemling. Altarpiece of Santa María la Real de Nájera (section one of three); oil on panel, c1487. Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, Belgium.

This week, we are blessed to hear the **Shenandoah Valley Harpers** play the anthem. Multi-talented choir member *Cathy Cunningham* is a member of the ensemble based in Harrisonburg. In addition to Cathy, the other members of the Shenandoah Valley Harpers are *Joyce Brunk, Ann Daggett and Linda Morrison*. Like many groups, the Shenandoah Valley Harpers presented their holiday concert online. The program included the piece that serves as this week's anthem: Janet Witman's *A Christmas Canon*, her arrangement of *The First Nowell* and Pachelbel's *Canon in D*. Many thanks to the Shenandoah Valley Harpers for their musical offerings on the fourth Sunday of Advent!



In the season of Advent, we reflect upon the gift of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and ask the question with poet Christina Rossetti,

what can I give, poor as I am?

None of us is so poor we cannot rejoice in God's many blessings.

Please return your pledge card as a reminder to yourself and a planning aid for the session. Remember: during this time of enforced separation, the work of the church goes on. Mail your pledges and contributions to:

P.O. Box 877
Waynesboro, VA 22980

Virtual Worship.
click on the pic



As we enter the holiday season, the risk of exposure to and spreading of COVID-19 increases. Many gatherings are moving inside homes and gathering spaces, which may have poor ventilation and little room for social distancing. This handy chart from the Virginia Department of Health can help you mitigate risk and/or plan safer gatherings.

LOW RISK

While determining risk level is ultimately up to you and your family, here are some lower risk winter holiday activities:



Having a small celebration or dinner with people who live in your household



Sending family and friends gifts in the mail or delivering them in contact-less way



Having a virtual dinner with family and friends



Watching sports and your favorite holiday movies from home



Buying gifts and decorations online

MODERATE RISK

While determining risk level is ultimately up to you and your family, here are some medium risk winter holiday activities:



Having a small outdoor dinner or celebration with family and friends who live in your community (Ask families to bring their own food, drinks, and utensils)



Visiting pumpkin patches, orchards, Christmas tree farms, etc. where people are using hand sanitizer, wearing masks, and practicing social distancing



Attending small outdoor sports events where safety precautions are in place and enforced

HIGH RISK

While determining risk level is ultimately up to you and your family, here are some higher risk winter holiday activities:



Attending large indoor celebrations, gatherings, dinners, etc. with people from outside your household



Shopping in crowded stores



Participating or being a spectator at crowded events like sports, races, caroling, parades, etc.



Using alcohol or drugs that may alter judgement and make it more difficult to practice COVID-19 safety measures

Advent

continued from above

Then there's the shoveling. I firmly believe one's appreciation for snow is in inverse proportion to the amount of snow they have actually moved by hand. Those who love snow the most - children, rich skiers, my dogs - are the ones who shovel it the least, and vice versa. (Some of you might take exception to this, insisting you just love shoveling snow, or don't really mind it, or think it's a small price to pay for winter beauty. You would be wrong.) I have said for more than 40 years: I shoveled enough snow in 1977 to last me a lifetime. And then I had to do it *again* in 1978. I have shoveled snow in Pittsburgh. I have shoveled snow in Lake effect snow Leicester, NY, and in Linesville, PA. I have shoveled snow here in the Valley. Mountains and mountains of snow have I shoveled. Light, powdery snow. Heavy, wet snow. Ice that used to be snow. Ice that never got to be snow. I get tired just thinking about it. And me feet are cold.

And finally, there's this: *snow lies*. It creates a fleeting illusion that things are fine, lovely, even, clean. A story:

In one of those dark, snowy high school years, a friend brought me home from band rehearsal in his dad's 1974 Malibu Station Wagon, the kind with a hatch in the back instead of a tailgate. After I removed my guitar case from the way back, he pulled the hatch down, failing to notice how far back the rest of the equipment had shifted. *Crash!* went the back glass; @#\$%! went my friend. There was safety glass *everywhere* - mostly in the car, but quite a lot in the driveway, too, as it turned out.

I say *as it turned out* because at that moment, *I couldn't tell* - all those little pellets of window were nestled snug in the snow that covered *everything*, and things looked fine. It wasn't until spring- sometime in July, I think - that my father finally asked, *what's with all this glass in the front yard?* And lest you think *snow hiding a multitude of sins* is somehow a rare occurrence, just come look at the back yard when the big thaw comes. Two dogs, people.

Truth is, Advent comes around at the low point of every year; winter is settling in, bringing the cold, the darkness, the extra effort required to do the most mundane things. And sometimes, snow.

That's why I love Christmas. In the darkest of nights, the light of the world makes a warm and welcoming glow; in the bleak midwinter, that ray of hope dispels the gloom and fills my heart with gratitude. Even snow is beautiful at Christmas.

During this particularly dark season, I pray God's blessings will be with you and yours.

Merry Christmas.

Peace

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[PC\(USA\) News](#)
[Virginia Department of Health updates](#)

Sources of Inspiration
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[Daily Readings from the Lectionary](#)
[Jan Edmiston's Blog](#)
[The Upper Room Devotional](#)

Sources of Fun
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[Daily Christmas Countdown](#)
[Today's Holiday](#)

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