

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BROOKVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA
DECEMBER 2006

NEWSLETTER

HOLIDAY EVENTS

The Presbyterian Women will be holding their annual "**Soup and Pie Luncheon**", mini bazaar and bake sale on Friday, December 1st, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. If you have items to sell, or baked goods to donate, you may bring them on Thursday, November 30th, by 1 p.m. Please price your items. If you would enjoy helping with this event, please call Mary Fleeger (849-8933).

The "**Live Nativity**" will be held Friday, December 1st, beginning at 8 p.m. It will begin at the Baptist Church, travel down Main Street and end on the lawn of our church.

We celebrate the beginning of the Advent Season by sharing in the **Sacrament of Holy Communion** on Sunday, December 3rd.

The **Advent study** "Don't Know Much About Islam!" will continue on Tuesday evenings, 7 p.m. December 5th, 12th and 19th, in the education building.

Presbyterian Women will meet on Thursday, December 7th, 11:30 a.m. in the education building. This will be a tureen lunch. The program will have a Christmas theme. Come and share in the fellowship of this most joyous season. **REMEMBER - ALL women are welcome!!**

Our **annual Advent Dinner**, hosted by the Deacons, will be held Sunday, December 10th, immediately following worship in the education building. You are asked to bring a salad or dessert to share. Meat, potatoes, vegetable, rolls and beverages will be provided by the Deacons. If you have not signed a reservation slip, please phone the church office, as soon as possible, so that we know how many to plan for.

Saturday, December 16th, is **Presbyterians at the Movies, "The Nativity Story"** at the Destinta Theater in Clarion. Members of the Pisgah Church will be joining us. The cost will be \$7.50 per ticket and includes the movie, small popcorn and small drink. Child care will be available at Pisgah Church. Please call the church office by Friday, December 8th, if you plan to attend. The time will be announced later.

Christmas Eve is always a special time in our church. The annual **pageant** will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. The pageant features youth and adults acting out the Christmas Story. It is primarily for children and their parents but all who enjoy the beautiful story are invited!!

The traditional **Candlelight Worship** will be held at 11:00 p.m., featuring special music

from our choir and The Nativity Story from Luke told by our storytellers.

Come and Let Us Adore Him!

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Our sanctuary Christmas decorations will again include our memorial “**Poinsettia**

We invite members and friends to purchase memorial poinsettias for display in

The pots must be of a certain size to fit, therefore, your flower should be ordered

the church office (849-2413) rather than directly. Please place your order no

December 13th. Cost per plant is \$8.50.

WHAT IS THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING?

For nearly seventy years, Presbyterians have given generously at Christmas to support unmet needs of families who have given their lives to the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). For many years, that offering has also supported racial ethnic education, helping students develop their gifts and find their calling. Today the Christmas Joy Offering continues to meet the needs of those students and has expanded to help families of active and retired church workers meet unexpected needs. As we celebrate the joy of God’s gift of Jesus Christ, may our gifts bear joyful witness to his love.

This year’s theme is “**Joy to the World!**” The gift we celebrate at Christmas is forever new and astonishing: God’s love is with us, accompanying us and working to transform us. As we open our hearts to that love, we find it will not be contained, but yearns to be shared with others.

Included in this Newsletter is a brochure. Please take a few minutes to read the bulletin inserts during Advent providing more specific information on how the offering is used. We will receive the offering on Sunday, December 24th.

FROM THE DEACONS:

Every year the Deacons provide Christmas gifts for our shut-ins. The number of shut-ins has increased over the past couple of years. On Sunday, November 26th, the congregation was asked to assist with the purchase of these gifts by “sponsoring” a shut-in gift with a \$10 donation. If you were not in church that day and would like to assist with this project, you may still do so by contacting the church office or ask an usher on Sunday morning for a special envelope.

Traditionally on Communion Sundays, the loose offering goes to the Deacons to assist them in their work through-out the year. This is the only source of income for their many benevolent acts, which include: flowers for hospitalized members and new babies, as well as the Advent Dinner and annual picnic. The next Communion is Sunday, December 3rd.

A very special **THANK YOU** to all who brought in canned goods for the Food Pantry and Little Debbie Snack Cakes and Hershey Candy Bars for

the prisoners of SCI Pine Grove Prison in Indiana, PA.

A new piano has been placed in the education building
In Memory of Thelma McGaughey.

Whether you are a musician, singer or a listener, everyone will

enjoy this

wonderful gift. Thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness.

Nursery workers for December:

December 3 rd	Susan Benton
December 10 th	Melissa Buck
December 17 th	Sue Bish
December 24 th	Diana Furl
December 31 st	Patty Wolfe

PARENTING GROUP

The Parenting Group will meet again on Monday, December 4th, at 7:00 p.m. upstairs in the education building to discuss "How to Keep Kids Honest." If you have a young child and are looking for support as you respond to the demands of being a Christian parent in a warp-speed world - come join us. You are welcome!

Sunday Morning Adult Education

December 3 rd	"Who Is Jesus Christ?" Men's Class Women's Class	Colossians 1: 15-23 Jerry Paden Linda Taylor
December 10 th	"What God Says about Jesus" Men's Class Women's Class	Hebrews 1: 1-9 T.J. Parlette Joyce Johnson
December 17 th	"Light that Conquers" Men's/Women's Class	1 John 1:1 - 2:5 Ed Kelso
December 24 th	"The Word Became Flesh" Men's Class Women's Class	John 1: 1-18 Paul Gray Linda Taylor
December 31 st	"Humiliation and Exaltation" Men's Class Women's Class	Philippians 2: 1-11 Bill Kutz

Advent Class Began

Rev. Parlette is leading a class entitled "Don't Know Much About Islam!" With the war in Iraq still going on, our involvement in Afghanistan continuing and situations in Iran and Israel heating up - it's imperative that we as Christians not only pray for peace, but act as peacemakers. One way we can do that on a local level is by striving to understand the fundamental nature of Islam. During these 4 sessions in Advent, we will be looking at the questions:

1. Where did Islam originate?
2. What do Muslims believe?
3. What similarities and differences are there between Christianity and Islam?
4. How can Christians and Muslims best relate to one another?

This class is free of charge and is open to anyone with an interest in learning more about Islam. The class meets on Tuesday nights, beginning November 28th and concluding on December 19th, at 7 p.m. in the education building. Even if you missed the first class, you may still join in. Please call the church office if you plan to attend so that we may have sufficient materials available.

Some history on The Passing of the Peace

(Reprinted from The Christian Century)

by Rev. Keith Herron

For the first 300 years after the ministry of Jesus, Christians suffered tremendously. They were hunted like animals, brought before various magistrates and kings and challenged to renounce their belief in Jesus. Many recanted under threat of torture. But many more clung courageously to the faith, refusing to claim any other name than Jesus' name and thus joining a large group of believers who became the church's heroes by their martyrdom.

The promise of Jesus is that when our moment of truth comes we need not fear that we will lack the courage to say what is needed. We don't have to concern ourselves with whether the words will rise up in our throats. The presence of God through the Holy Spirit will be with us and will give us what we need to say. Jesus offers us his peace as a gift of grace in that moment.

The "passing of the peace" is the sign that the church has lovingly shared through the harshest of times. When we enact this ritual, we may forget its power and its history: it has been practiced in times of great duress and suffering. When one of us takes the hand of another and says, "May the peace of Christ be with you," and the other responds, "and with you," we offer testimony to Christ's peace, and we prove to the unbelieving world that we are God's people.

Keith D. Herron is senior pastor of Holmeswood Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri

Around this time each year, we all start to worry a little more about picking up a cold or the flu when we go out in public. During the worship service, when we "Pass the Peace," please be mindful of those who do not wish to shake hands. If you are concerned about illness, please know that a friendly word and a warm smile pass the peace of Christ just as well as a handshake. By "Passing the Peace," we want to encourage an open and friendly environment - we don't want anyone to go home sick.

THE ACTS 16:5 INITIATIVE

At our November meeting, the Session approved our church's participation in a transformation program being offered by our Presbytery. The Acts 16:5 Initiative is a program designed by Dr. E. Stan Ott that seeks to stimulate conversation, imagination and new directions in the vitality of our shared Christian experience.

We understand the truth of the words of W. Edward Deming, "Every system is perfectly designed to achieve the results it gets." If we are fully satisfied with the life of our congregations as they are, there is no need to think about a transformational future. However, if we want to grow in the vitality of our worship, our fellowship, and our discipleship, as well as in our missional impact on the surrounding community, then we need to think in terms of ministry design - how do we honor the work of our present ministries and members while creating the new to reach new people.

The Acts 16:5 Initiative does not offer a simple checklist of things to do in order to grow congregational vitality. Rather, it offers a theology of transformational ministry, essential defining practices, and a wide variety of potential "next steps" that a congregation may take. Since every

congregation faces different issues and possibilities, the Acts 16:5 Initiative involves a great deal of freedom for each pastor, designated leader, and team in discerning appropriate next steps.

Over the next two years, representatives from our church will join our Pastor at several large equipping events held in our Presbytery. With the help and support of our Session, we will be seeking to design our ministries that reach out into the community and grow disciples. Our Pastor will also be participating in a cluster group with other Acts 16:5 leaders, designed for encouragement and accountability.

As we seek to discern God's will for our work and mission here at Brookville Presbyterian by participating in this project, please remember the Church in your prayers, and consider what new ministry God might be calling you to have a hand in.

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Applying Bible Principles

There are some wonderful principles in the Old Testament which apply to present-day Christians. One of these is in Deuteronomy 8: 10-18. Stated in contemporary language, it says, "When you have eaten and are full, when your cars, houses and bank accounts multiply, don't forget where it came from: Remember the Lord your God."

In truth, all that we have comes from God. He determines what we will receive, whether it be money, gold, silver, houses, land, bank accounts, stocks, bonds, etc. It all belongs to Him in the first place, and He entrusts it to us. According to David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29, riches, honor, power, and wealth all come from God.

That's why there is no such thing as a self-made man or woman. Oh, we have to do our part. God's plan is not that we just sit around praying and reading the Bible all day long so that what we need to survive will miraculously drop into our hands. We're not just to pray for "our daily bread," but we're also to get up each day and work for it! That's why the Apostle Paul stated clearly, "Anyone unwilling to work should not eat"

(2 Thessalonians 3:10). But in reality, the amount of money and wealth which we receive entrusts to each of us the amounts which He knows will be best for us.

What should be our reaction to our financial state? Some might pray, "Dear Lord, you must have made a mistake concerning me and my finances. Please give me more money." Others might try to circumvent God's design for their lives by trying to win the lottery or to obtain large sums of money through some other means. Mature Christians, however, will realize God's infinite wisdom far surpasses their limited perspective. They will accept with a thankful spirit what God has entrusted to them and seek to honor God by their living and by their giving.

As of November 26th, pledges have been received totaling \$96,338. If you have not returned your commitment card estimating your contributions for next year, please do so. If you need a commitment card, please contact Judy Greeley in the church office.

Brookville Ministerial Association Plans a Special Service

In response to the hard feelings and battered psyches stemming from the contract negotiations at the Brookville Area Schools, the Ministerial Association will be leading a special service for wholeness and peace.

It is the Ministerial Association's prayer and belief that ONLY God's intervention into the talks

will heal the wounds of the past, present as well as future, in order to create an atmosphere whereby issues can be agreed upon and a contract can be resolved.

To this end, the Association wants to do what we do best - WORSHIP. On December 10, 2006, at 7 p.m. at the First Church of God the Association will be sponsoring a Service of Reconciliation to begin the creation of an atmosphere to start this process of reconciliation. The Association will then request each of the churches in the School district to simultaneously lift the process of negotiations up to GOD for His resolve by the Power of the Holy Spirit.

The service will be Liturgical in nature and will include music and prayers spelling out God's desire for us to be reconciled to him and hence to each other.

Come join us on December 10th at 7 p.m. at the First Church of God as we ask for God's heavenly presence and divine guidance.

Officer Training Scheduled

If you have just been elected an Elder or Deacon, please try to attend the following training sessions:

For Elders - Sunday, January 7th, 9:30 a.m. in the parlor

For Deacons - Wednesday, January 3rd, 6:30 p.m. in the parlor

New officers, Elders, Deacons and Trustees, will be ordained and installed during worship on Sunday, January 7th.

Have You Checked Out Our Redesigned Web Page?

If you haven't recently visited our redesigned web page, make sure to go to www.brookvillepresby.org to see what's new.

You can view our calendar of events for the month, read the current Newsletter, catch up on past sermons or see pictures of church events. Since the redesign was launched this summer, the people viewing our web site has risen by 300%, up from 300 or so hits a month to 2000 hits and more. Many thanks to John McManigle and Judy Greeley for all they do to keep the web site current and accurate.

Take a few minutes and come visit us.

"Praise"

by Raymond Hearn

Clouds nod as they pass
Stars shine with brilliance
Within the cosmos there is heard
A great chorus
Angels having special solos
The fabric of life taking on new texture
Smiles come more easily
Hands reach out less hesitantly to strangers
Lions and calves walk peacefully together
Hungry are fed
Lame walk
A special star shown with great brilliance
To lead the way

*A blessed Advent, a joyous Christmas
and a Happy New Year
From your Church staff.*

And it came to pass
It was Christmas.