



December 2007

BERWYN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
INVITING NURTURING AND ENCOURAGING SERVICE

The Lighted Cross

FROM THE PASTOR

A season of God's love

“Love came down at Christmas.” So says one of the Christmas hymns (No. 242), reminding us that the Babe in the Manger was an expression of divine love. Down through the ages, God's people have experienced divine love repeatedly through the providence, goodness and graciousness of God. It is accepted by us as Christians that God's love is real and beyond human understanding. Paul summed it up when he said that the love of God surpasses all human understanding (Ephesians 3:18-19). For many, the love of God is corporate yet personal; for all yet individual; all-embracing yet unique. God's people feel special and peculiar when God's love for them is considered.

For Christians, Christmas is a time when we celebrate with joy and gladness the love of God for humankind. We believe that God's love for us was expressed in God's coming in human form. It is a time when we remind ourselves that God wanted to be physically and intimately involved in expressing a love that was eternal. God wanted to express in a “hands-on way” the eternal love that has been had for persons from Creation. God wanted to express, in an unmistakable way, that loving involved giving of self. So God came as a Babe and was laid in a lowly, humble manger. As a Babe, God would have received and felt the love and care that Mary and Joseph would have provided.

Through the Holy Family we have a model of what love looks like and the significance of love in our relationship with God and others. “Love came down at Christmas” so as to teach us that we have value and worth as human beings and that we are special to God. When Christmas comes around, I cannot help but think of John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” Christmas reminds us of this great and matchless love.

As we celebrate the love of God at Christmas, may our love for our families and others be celebrated and blessed. My family joins me in wishing all of you a love-filled Christmas!

Blessings!

Pastor Phil

REPORT ON STEWARDSHIP

Acknowledging the generosity of God

The Church's Stewardship 2008 program culminated with a celebration on Nov. 18. The program leader was the Rev. J. Dennis Williams, retired clergyman living at Cornwall who has served a variety of congregations in Eastern Pennsylvania, including West Chester UMC.

The very idea of "consecration" suggests that there is something holy about any moment in which one responds to the goodness of God. So we took the day to acknowledge the bounty resulting from God's generosity. Denny had us consider Jesus' story of the widow's mite (Luke 21). Though it just a small amount, the widow gave 100 percent, which, as the preacher suggested, makes us uncomfortable – but also inspired.

So what do we do in response to this story and to God's generosity? In fact, the conviction is that part of our spiritual health depends on responding generously to God's goodness. So, on the 18th, "estimate of giving cards" were prepared and signed.

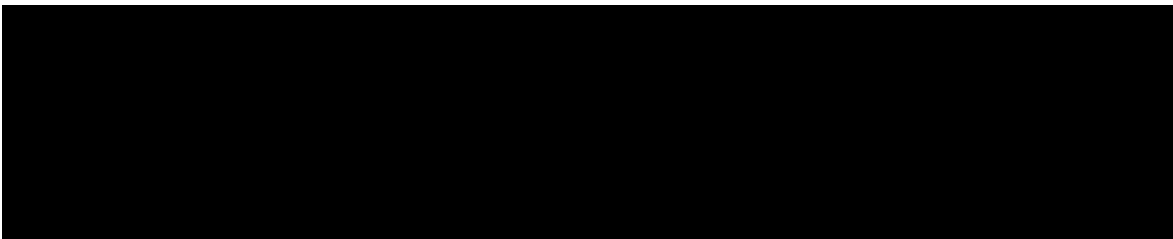
During the worship hours, we received 84 cards from "giving units" (members or member families). Of those, 61 indicated that they were increasing for 2008 what they had estimated for 2007, which is fabulous! The total amount represented by those "estimate of giving cards" was \$283,209. The next step was to contact people who didn't share the day and to invite them to return cards. The Finance Committee then prepared a budget based on the information received, for presentation to the Administrative Board on Dec. 4. When all these steps are completed, a complete stewardship report will be published.

It's easy to think of financial management as being all about dollars and cents and scrimping and buying. There is a clear call to put these headaches and worries in perspective. The way we use our money matters to God, makes a difference to us, and affects the world around us. Growing in God's spirit involves financial matters.

As we enter the Advent Season, the Stewardship Committee extends best wishes for a blessed and warm Christmas.

Steve Cherry

Finance Committee's report for 2007, through October



Soup's on again: Every Thursday, starting at 5 p.m.

Soupy Thursdays have resumed. Soup will be available beginning at 5 p.m. You can buy soup and bread to take out, or you can eat it with friends from church in Schieck Hall.

Takeouts are available from 5 to 7 p.m. The price is \$5 a quart for the soup and \$3 for



a loaf of home-baked (actually church-baked) white or wheat bread. Please bring your own container for the soup.

Eat-in is available from 6 to 7:15 p.m. The price is \$3 a person for all you can eat: soup, bread, beverage and dessert. This is a great way for you to have your church meeting. Meet around the soup table, have supper and take care of business at the same time. Please let Rick Stoker know if you are having a meeting so we can have a table set up for you.

Dec. 6: cream of potato.

Dec. 13: vegetable beef.

Dec. 20: cauliflower cheese.

Dec. 27: no soup (Happy Holidays).

Rick Stoker

COMING EVENTS

Advent Fair, Dec. 2

A churchwide Sunday School Advent Fair will take place in Schieck Hall on Dec. 2 from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m.

While the Advent Fair is taking place, the Adult Council will sponsor a pancake breakfast. Stay after the early service or come early for the 10:30 service. Eat pancakes and other breakfast items and visit with friends in Schieck Hall.

A free-will offering will be taken to defray the expenses of the pancake breakfast.

Christmas Brunch, Dec. 16

We will have our Christmas Brunch at noon Sunday, Dec. 16, in Schieck Hall. Enjoy the special music provided by the choirs at the 10:30 service, then proceed to Schieck Hall for a wide variety of breakfast and lunch items.

The price is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 5-10. Children under 5 are free. Reservations for the brunch will be taken on Dec. 2 and 9.

Potluck Supper, Jan. 5

The Adult Fellowship will have a Potluck Supper at 6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 5, in Schieck Hall.

Join us for a fun evening of sampling items around the potluck table, then stay to help remove decorations from the sanctuary. This will be a nice, relaxing evening with friends – and we will get some work done, too.

THE CHURCH'S YOUTH

Confirmation class to begin Jan. 20

Nancy Atchison and Janelle Larson will be assisting Pastor Phil in teaching the confirmation class each Sunday afternoon from Jan. 20 through May 4. The classes will begin at 4:30 p.m. and end in time for the confirmands to attend youth fellowship.

The confirmation service will be held on May 11, which is Pentecost Sunday and Mother's Day. (Easter is early in 2008; consequently Pentecost is early as well.)

The curriculum to be used is "Making Disciples." It was written by Bishop William H. Willimon, the Episcopal leader of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church and former Dean of Chapel at Duke University.

Appalachia Service Project

If you are interested in making the Appalachia Service Project trip during the summer of 2008, you should attend an informational meeting at noon Sunday, Dec. 9, in the Youth Suite. ASP works within communities to make homes warmer, safer and drier. The program is for youth who have completed the eighth grade and are at least 14 years old.

Our assistant coordinator

Jess Simmons has joined the youth staff to assist Ryan Benton, our coordinator of youth ministries. Jess is a student at West Chester University, studying elementary education with a religion minor. She will work mainly with middle school youth.

Youth events

Dec. 3: Hanging of the greens, 3 to 7 p.m.

Dec. 7-8: Senior high lock-in at the church, starting at 8 p.m. Friday and lasting until 8 a.m. Saturday.

Jan. 4-6: Maryland Youth Conference in Ocean City.

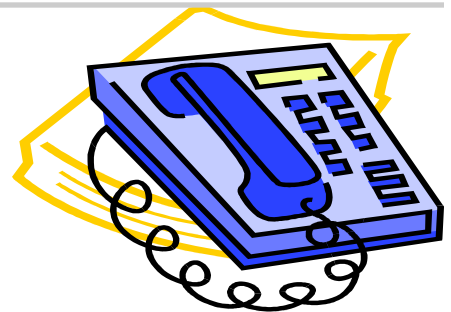


Lighted Cross Deadlines

The next Lighted Cross will be published on Jan. 1. If you would like to contribute something to the next issue, please email your article to Gene Foreman at

gene.foreman@verizon.net

by Dec. 15. There is a mailbox in the church office for Lighted Cross articles as well.



Church Phone

610-644-5555

Office email:

officebumc@comcast.net

Church Website:

www.berwynumc.org

MISSION MEMO

Bringing holiday joy to others

Our Christmas Mission projects are well under way.

The Nursery School and Sunday School children will be bringing in new small toys, books and gifts for children and their moms who live in shelters in downtown Philadelphia. We are supporting the work of Mount Zion United Methodist Church at 1530-1538 North 11th Street. Each year, Mount Zion provides a Christmas meal and gifts for homeless families in nearby shelters. Children may also bring toiletries and personal items for men using a shelter at 802 North Broad Street operated by the Committee to End Homelessness, a program that Mount Zion also supports.

You, the congregation, will be bringing gifts and placing them under the tree for the children served by United Methodist Children's Home. A list of gift ideas is in the narthex near the Christmas tree. The Children's Home, which serves more than 2,500 children in the Greater Philadelphia area, provides each child with a gift – sometimes, the only gift the child receives.



You will be decorating the tree with hats and mittens for United Methodist Neighborhood Services at 804 North Broad Street. Dr. Mary White, the director, distributes used clothing and food to the needy. During the Christmas season she operates a store where neighbors may purchase items for Christmas. Our mittens and hats are sold for a nominal price in the store as gifts.

You also are invited to contribute to the Christmas meals fund, which pays for meals to those in our congregation who need our help.

Thank you so much for all the support you have given to the mission projects at BUMC during the year. With your help, our church has:

- Aided the people of Peru who were devastated by an earthquake.
- Supported the Appalachia Service Project mission of the youth of our church.
- Aided our sister church, Roca Eterna in El Salvador, and the nearby medical clinic. BUMC members formed a mission team to upgrade the Sunday School at Rocas Eterna, teach at a Vacation Bible School, and work in the clinic.
- Provided meals and volunteer staffing at Interfaith Hospitality Network at St. Thomas Villanova.
- Through contributions to Penny Jar, supported our child, Tamara Phira in Zambia.

The adult fellowship has had its own mission projects with Habitat for Humanities and the food cupboard at Trinity Presbyterian Church. The Worship Committee has an active shawl ministry.

Betsy Newman

'The wrap-around hug of God's love'

"I wrapped the shawl around her shoulders while saying a simple prayer. I told her that the woman who made the shawl had crocheted it with love and prayers. I told her how the shawl had been consecrated by prayer and to know that the love of God was with her. Maura held the shawl close for the two hours we spent together. I watched her anxiety fade away and the distress leave her face. She spoke of things she had not been able to verbalize previously. She opened her heart and we laughed and we cried. I told her that the spirit of the shawl was with her, and it would be with her always. Her shawl was now her 'wrap-around hug of God's love'... . This is all she will need."

Three days after Maura received her prayer shawl, she had a double mastectomy for breast cancer; she is only 40 years old and has two young children.

This is the testimony of a member who presented a prayer shawl to a friend. Since the dedication of this ministry last November, more than 40 prayer shawls have been given to others. If you knit or crochet, just contact the church office to become a part of this exciting ministry of the church.

Ann West

Card of thanks

I would like to express my appreciation for the very generous gift that you gave me for being the guest preacher [Oct. 7]. It was a great pleasure to share in your Worldwide Communion Service and to remember my connections with not only South Africa but also with Christians throughout the world. Thank you for your kindness.

Rodney Miller

SAVE THESE DATES

Films resume Jan. 12:

'The Price of Sugar'

The Church and Society Task Force's film series will resume at 6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12, when *The Price of Sugar* will be shown.

The film, produced by Bill Haney and narrated by Paul Newman, charts the heartbreaking plight of Haitian immigrants trapped in a modern form of indentured servitude in sugar-cane fields of the Dominican Republic.

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Alliance for International Medicine (AIM) team travels to the Dominican Republic twice a year to care for the impoverished children living on the bateyes (shantytowns) while their parents toil in the cane fields.

Dr. Rodney Finalle, medical director of AIM, will lead a discussion before and after the film. He will be joined by our congregation's Ruth Frey, who travels to the Dominican Republic each year as an AIM team leader.

All-church potluck, Jan. 26

The All-Church Potluck Supper will be held at 6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 26, in Schieck Hall. This is the annual Supper Club potluck supper, but this year the club is inviting all church members to attend. After the meal there will be a program of praise music sponsored by the Fine Arts Committee. *Details next month.*

Fall Festival, Oct. 6

The BUMC Fall Festival is in the planning stage. We will need your help and your discarded treasures. Think of the Fall Festival when you clean your closets during the next 10 months.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Don Kirkland's 2,144-mile adventure

In April 1984, Don Kirkland started hiking the Appalachian Trail at Springer Mountain in Georgia. Seven years and 2,144 miles later, he reached his goal: the Katahdin summit in north central Maine.

At the monthly breakfast of the Men's Fellowship on Nov. 10, Don recounted what he calls "the adventure of a lifetime."

Don made the journey in a series of hikes, usually two a year, lasting seven to 16 days each. On the Pennsylvania section of the trail, he made one-day hikes. He averaged 10.5 miles a day, a pace deliberate enough to enjoy the spectacular scenery. The conditions were rugged. The trail is not level ground, of course, and the weather ranged from hot and muggy to cold and rainy. Sometimes Don did not see a human for two or three days. On the occasions he encountered bears, they fortunately were headed in the other direction.



Don exhibited the backpack that sustained him. If you have to carry all your supplies on your back, he explained, you quickly learn to distinguish between essential and desirable. Weighing 42 pounds loaded, his pack contained food (mostly trail mix and dried noodles), rudimentary cooking utensils, tent and sleeping bag. Because water is so heavy, he carried little with him. Usually he drank from streams, purifying the water with a hand-operated filtering device.

Hiking the trail in segments requires precision logistics. Don had to arrange for someone to drive him to the starting point of a segment and park his car at the end of the segment. He sometimes mailed a food-resupply box to himself at a post office near the trail; once he had to bury the cache, carefully noting its location in his trail notes. (He found it right where he left it.)

Trivia question: If a hiker starts on the trail from Georgia, as Don did, what is the next state on the trail? Is it (a) Tennessee, (b) South Carolina, (c) North Carolina, or (d) Alabama? Only a few in his Schieck Hall audience had the correct answer. (It's at the end of this story in small type.)

Don still enjoys hiking with family and friends, but he's scaled down to journeys of one, two or three days.

Christmas hymns on Dec. 8

For the next meeting of the Men's Fellowship, on Saturday, Dec. 8, the theme will be "The Best Loved Hymns of Christmas – Exploring the Words and the Music."

The singing will be led by Judith Lang, our director of music, and Al Froy, leader of the Men's Fellowship. "We will study and sing as many Christmas hymns as we can in one hour," Al said.

Breakfast will be served at 8 a.m. in Schieck Hall, and the meeting will end promptly at 9:30. Come to enjoy good food for both the body and the soul.

Answer to the trivia question: (c) North Carolina.

Lending a hand in December

Liturgists

Dec. 2

Judy Edinger

Dec. 9

Jean West

Dec. 16

Maxine Jex

Dec. 23

Ruth Rumiano

Dec. 30

Youth

Acolytes

Dec. 2

Emily Anderson

Dec. 9

Katie Dillon

Dec. 16

Andres Montaner

Dec. 23

Kari Peterson

Dec. 30

Zachary Phelps

Ushers

Dec. 2

Jacque Leiser

Jack Campbell

Jon Stockler

Alice Nicholas

Dec. 9

Don Young

John McDowell

Peh Ku

Pete Tillett

Dec. 16

Bob Fisk

Nagle Bridwell

Judy Dunn

Margie O'Donnell

Dec. 23

Mike Benton

Ed Denisevicz

Molly Denisevicz

Chuck Parvin

Dec. 30

Youth



Story Time Volunteers

Dec. 2

Wendy Wolov

Dec. 9

Beth DePenna

Dec. 16

Brenda Hoffman

Dec. 23

Janelle Larson

Dec. 30

Kathleen West

WHAT'S GOING ON AT B.U.M.C.

The holidays are busy at the nursery school

The nursery school has been humming. This stretch from Halloween to Christmas is a very exciting time. The big Thanksgiving Feast took place with First Americans and Pilgrims coming together to give thanks and to feast. The very minute Thanksgiving was over, we started getting ready for the big Christmas Show. We are having a dress rehearsal on Monday, Dec. 10, and the show will take place the following day. Both shows will begin at 9:30 a.m. We are very fortunate to have Judith Lang playing the piano as accompaniment for the children.

Scholarships for students in Eternal Rock

We will be sponsoring students in our sister church, Eternal Rock, in Ahuachapan, El Salvador, again in 2008. Education is key for these students and their community, and they have expressed gratitude and appreciation for our support in the past. Costs range from \$320 a year for elementary students to \$700 a year for students in college. If you are interested in supporting a student this year, please contact Pastor Phil, Nancy Atchison or Janelle Larson.

Church and Society to meet Dec. 2

The Church and Society Task Force will meet at 8 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 2, in the Library to plan for Community Shopping Night and "Movies That Make You Think." The task force will host a Community Shopping Night at the Exton Ten Thousand Villages from 5 to 9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14. You're invited: Fair Trade crafts make great Christmas gifts.

Help for those in a time of need

The Membership and Congregational Care Committee is offering help in time of need to those who attend BUMC. We will provide meals, transportation, or both. Ruth Rumiano, who is coordinating this project, needs help in preparing and delivering food and in providing transportation. Please let her know at 610-647-5264 if you are willing to help as needed.

Lydia Circle to have a Christmas Celebration

Lydia Circle (United Methodist Women) will have a Christmas Celebration at Dottie Brennan's home at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2. Please bring an appetizer or a dessert to share. We will collect small toiletries for a women's shelter that night too. Please let Dottie know if you will attend: holidaysshoregal@aol.com or 610-688-6701.

ETC Class continues 'Saving Jesus' study

The ETC (Every Topic Considered) Sunday School Class is still working on the "Saving Jesus" curriculum. This month the class is spending two Sundays each on Lessons 5 and 6.