



January 2009

BERWYN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
INVITING NURTURING AND ENCOURAGING SERVICE

The Lighted Cross

AND THE TOP FIVE ARE . . .

Inventorying our spiritual gifts

On Nov. 16, 89 people completed the “Your Spiritual Gifts Inventory” as part of that day’s worship experience. This questionnaire is an inventory developed by Charles Bryant in his book *Rediscovering our Spiritual Gifts*.

Bryant’s book is a study of the scriptural basis for the spiritual gifts that are alive in all of us as a special blessing from God. Bryant has identified 32 spiritual gifts in his study of the scriptures. Each of these gifts has an important role to play as communities of faith continue to be of service throughout the world.

Members who completed the questionnaire received their individual inventories on Dec. 21. In compiling the results for BUMC, we took the top five spiritual gifts that were identified for each of the people completing the survey and tabulated these to produce a summary for the congregation as a whole. The top five spiritual gifts of our congregation:

Humor: The ability to bring laughter and joy to situations.

Faith: The ability to extend one’s faith to serve the broader needs related to the life and ministry of the church.

Mercy: The ability to relate to the physical, mental, spiritual or emotional situation of others and the desire to do something to help.

Discernment: The ability to differentiate between that which is of God and that which is not, and to use this knowledge to support the health and welfare of the church.

Administration: The ability to organize resources and people for effective church ministries.

I’m sure we can all think of many examples where BUMC has been a conduit for God’s love and caring as we’ve used these gifts. The top five, together with the other 27 gifts that are indeed present in BUMC as well, equip us to be a church community that serves our local community and reaches out to people around the world.

If you are interested in learning more about your spiritual gifts, look at the United Methodist website (www.umc.org). A search on “Spiritual Gifts” will take you to a section devoted to the topic.

In addition, beginning mid-January I will be offering a short study on spiritual gifts as part of the ETC Class that meets during the Church School hour. You are welcome to join this group for a spirited conversation.

If you didn’t take the survey in November and want to do so, we have extra booklets in the church office.

Jim Tiede

Good stewardship with financial restraint

2008, thus far Because November was a strong month, financially speaking, the picture is encouraging. Positive performance is accounted for by generous mortgage fund giving and in “catch-up” gifts related to promised or pledged contributions. Detail is found at the end of the article, which shows deficit spending of about \$21,000 (in October the number was \$39,000). Approaching the end of the fiscal year, a main concern is the extent to which it is necessary to dip into reserves when closing the books. But good stewardship with financial restraint has effectively supported the ongoing ministry and mission of the congregation. All continue to be proud of the work and life of the Berwyn United Methodist congregation, especially this year.

Budget 2009 Planning for 2009 was particularly arduous. It is impossible to ignore the massive impact of the faltering world economy, which is felt in all places, including the local community. It is clear that the ministry of the church of Christ becomes even more critical precisely because challenges like this affect people. So the need to press forward is clear.

Budget '09 has emerged as a more austere challenge than that of previous years. Numerous versions of the expense budget were considered, and the result is realistic. Still, the work to fund our ministry will be ongoing month to month, since promised contributions, as realized from the fall stewardship effort, do not cover the most basic statement of projected expenses. Throughout, the committee struggled with the notion that it is important to *not* pull back from some key areas of ministry and growth. For example, the recent improvements and expansion in youth and children’s ministries are understood to be too important to trim.

The Administrative Board, meeting on Dec. 2, approved a budget for 2009 that has a \$31,000 deficit. Overall, expenses increased 0%. Pledged contributions are 4.7% less than in 2008.

The challenge for 2009: “engagement” The promise is continuing ministry by the congregation and continuing work by the Finance Committee. Obviously, the year will require constant vigilance, and the finance stewards will begin work in the first quarter of the year to consider new ways to advance the cause. The conviction is that financial stewardship supports what is done, but also is a reflection of engagement. The life of a congregation is, after all, sustained by the engagement and commitment of each participant.

Steve Cherry

Financial results for November

November 2008	Actual	Budget	favorable (unfavorable)	% of budget
Contribution Income	\$323,749	\$360,360	(\$36,611)	90%
Contrib - Mortgage fund	\$17,553	\$7,517	\$10,036	234%
Other Income	\$41,856	\$39,406	\$2,450	106%
Expense	\$404,135	\$411,038	\$6,903	98%
gain(loss)	(\$20,977)	(\$3,755)	(\$17,222)	

FROM THE PASTOR

Nurturing the faith through studying the Bible

ONE OF the exciting aspects of the Strategic Ministry Action Plan (MAP) that was approved by the Charge Conference in November is the emphasis on our spiritual nurture. Our growth in grace is something that is vital to who we are and what we do as faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Nurturing the faith can be understood in different ways.

A definition of *nurture* I came across recently was the one offered by Bishop Robert Schnase in his book *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. He defined it as “intentional faith development.” I like that, for we do need to be intentional in developing our faith as we continue on our journey toward God. One way to be intentional in our faith development is through the study of God’s most holy and sacred Word. I must also hasten to say that the sermon is one of the ways in which we get an exposition of God’s word. An in-depth Bible study is even more beneficial to our spiritual growth, hence my encouraging Bible study.

At BUMC, we have a Wednesday evening Disciple Bible Study group that meets every other Wednesday. Each Wednesday morning there is another Bible Study group that meets at 11:30 a.m. with lunch from 12:30 to 1. In this group the format is to study the Word beforehand, and then each person shares his or her insights. It is a dynamic and interactive study in which each participant gets an opportunity to share and to bless each other. The fellowship and the dialogue at lunch inspire and strengthen us.

Starting on Jan. 21, the Wednesday morning group will study Galatians. This is an interesting epistle written by Paul. In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson gives this analysis of what St. Paul wrestled with in his address to the Galatians: “When men and women get their hands on religion, one of the first things they often do is turn it into an instrument for controlling others, either putting or keeping them ‘in their place.’”

The history of such religious manipulation and coercion is long and tedious. It is little wonder that people who have only known religion on such terms experience release or escape from it as freedom. The problem is that the freedom turns out to be short-lived. Paul of Tarsus was doing his diligent best to add yet another chapter to this dreary history when he was converted by Jesus to something radically and entirely different – a free life in God. Through Jesus, Paul learned that God was not an impersonal force to be used to make people behave in certain prescribed ways, but a personal Savior who set us free to live a free life. God did not coerce us from without, but set us free from within.

It was a glorious experience, and Paul set off telling others, introducing and inviting everyone he met into this free life. In his early travels he founded a series of churches in the Roman province of Galatia. A few years later Paul learned that religious leaders of the old school had come into those churches, called his views and authority into question, and were reintroducing the old ways, herding all these freedom-loving Christians back into the corral of religious rules and regulations. Paul was, of course, furious. He was furious with the old guard for coming in with their strong-arm religious tactics and intimidating the Christians into giving up their free life in Jesus. But he was also furious with the Christians for caving in to the intimidation. His letter to the Galatian churches helps them, and us, recover the original freedom. It also gives direction in the nature of God’s gift of freedom – most necessary guidance, for “freedom is a delicate and subtle gift, easily perverted and often squandered” (*The Message*).

Come and join us at the beginning of this New Year (possibly one of the New Year’s resolutions?) to be engaged in this exciting study and being intentional in your faith development for the rest of your life. Be blessed! Be strong! And keep the faith!

Pastor Phil



Young artists turn the hallway doors into festive decorations

The children of Berwyn were hard at work in December, decorating and having fun. During the Hanging of the Greens on Dec. 7, when the entire church was decorated for the holidays, young artists gift-wrapped the doors in the main hall. Pastor Phil is photographed here with the decorators of his office door, Victoria Phelps and Emily Hoffman. On Dec. 12, at Children's Late Night, the young people were back — in their pajamas! — to enjoy fellowship, create a Wishes for the World bulletin board, and watch plenty of movies.

MISSIONS MEMO

Thanks for supporting our Christmas mission

On Dec. 7, our church's donation of six garbage-sized bags of toys, games, books and craft items was delivered to the Methodist Home for Children. I drove into the city with those bags and was amazed to arrive on the first day and to realize how many other toys would be delivered to fill up the room where they are sorted for distribution. On Dec. 10, when my husband, Joe, delivered our final bag, the room was almost filled. Gifts are given to 2,000 children and their mothers — families served by programs at the Methodist Home for Children.

On Dec. 8, Mount Zion United Methodist Church in North Philadelphia received two large bags of clothes and toiletries for men; several small bags of women's toiletries, gloves and scarves, jewelry, etc.; a large bag of baby clothes; and about 12 bags of small toys. Nancy Atchison, Donna Pitts and I needed two cars to carry the gifts. They were received by Cressa Morris, mission chairman at Mount Zion, and Gwen, whose last name I did not record. We were helped in unloading the cars by Gwen and the students who were attending the after-school tutoring program that meets at the church on Mondays and Wednesdays. The ladies were excited about all the things that the Nursery School and Sunday School students had donated. They gave us hugs to give to you. A special thanks to Ann Bole and the teachers at our Nursery School and the children and their families who donated all of the wonderful items; to Ryan Benton, youth coordinator, and Jess Simmons, children's coordinator, and the children and youth who donated items; and to Cressa Morris, the mission chair at Mouth Zion, who coordinated the project.

The mittens and scarves for United Methodist Neighborhood Services were delivered on Dec. 10. Dr. White was pleased to have these items for her Christmas Shop, where the items are sold at a nominal price to the people in her North Philadelphia neighborhood. The proceeds are used to support all of the programs of United Methodist Neighborhood Services.

Once again this year, we provided Acme gift cards to be used for Christmas meals for our parishioners.

We have begun sending money to the family of Maria Claudia, who has been hospitalized in Peru for chemotherapy. Thanks to the Youth Group, who raised the money for her care.

Thanks to all who made this a blessed Christmas.

Betsy Newman

Book Club selections are now in the Library

Something new has been added to the BUMC Library shelves. Selections from the BUMC Book Club reading lists have been donated to the Library and are available for borrowing. Some of the titles you will find are these:

Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini is the author's first novel. It is a father-son story written from a male point of view. Amir and Hassan grow up together in Afghanistan like brothers, but their opportunities are very different — Amir is rich and educated, Hassan is poor and illiterate.

A Thousand Pleasant Suns, the second novel by Khaled Hosseini, focuses on the plight of women and families in modern-day Afghanistan. This multigenerational story, told through the alternating voices of two women, Miriam and Laila, spans the turbulent period from the 1970s to post-9/11.

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln by Doris Kearns Goodwin is the story of how Lincoln was able to form friendships with men who had previously opposed him. Lincoln was the least likely of the four candidates to win the 1860 Republican presidential nomination. Upon his election he invited his opponents into his cabinet: William Seward, Salmon P. Chase and Edwin Bates.

Marjorie Smink

Creating a documentary of a charity event

When members of his family participated for the second straight year in the Lung Cancer Walk/Run along the east bank of the Schuylkill in Philadelphia, 14-year-old Zachary Phelps decided to make a visual record of the fund-raising event.

Zachary's five-and-a-half-minute documentary on the five-kilometer event Nov. 2 combines video and still photography, with sophisticated camera zooming. It was posted on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TG5_G2ijxIg) and had drawn 70 views by mid-December. The walkers and runners can be seen in beautiful fall scenery along Boathouse Row and Kelly Drive. Tip for better viewing: Click on "Watch in HD."

The Phelps family raised \$1,280 in donations in honor of Zachary's maternal grandmother, Theresa DellaVecchia of Blackwood, N.J., who is a lung-cancer survivor. Zachary's mother, Gina, organized the fundraising with this website: <http://www.firstgiving.com/terrydellavecchiafamilyfriends>. Mrs. DellaVecchia was among family and friends who participated in the event, which raised a total of more than \$100,000 for lung-cancer research.

Zachary is an eighth grader at TE Middle School, where he plays soccer, basketball and lacrosse. This is his first documentary. He said he taught himself the production skills with the help of a tutorial on his computer and advice from a computer-savvy neighbor. Zachary and his father, Scott, did the photography.

At a family gathering on Thanksgiving, Zachary presented the documentary to his grandmother.

Gina invites members of the BUMC community to "take a peek" at the documentary. She said, "We are so proud of our team, our mom, and Zachary for this opportunity to share this with you."

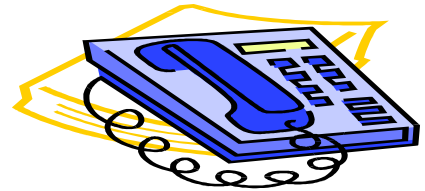
'Movies That Make You Think' resume on Jan. 10

We will resume our film series at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10, with *The Exonerated*, director Bob Balaban's film adaptation of Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen's true-life stage play. Susan Sarandon, Danny Glover, Brian Dennehy, Aidan Quinn, Delroy Lindo and David Brown Jr. portray six people who were convicted of crimes they didn't commit. They spent years on various death rows before their cases were reexamined and new evidence led to their being set free. The children's feature will be *Rat-touille* by Disney-Pixar.

The Lighted Cross

Next deadline: Jan. 20

The Lighted Cross is published monthly (except in July and August) to spread the good news about the activities of Berwyn United Methodist Church. Chairs and members of committees are invited to submit articles to inform the congregation about events and the work of the church. Individuals are invited to submit cards of thanks and brief items of interest about congregation members. Your submissions may have to be edited for length. The next issue will be published Feb. 1, and an electronic version will be available on the church website by Jan. 23. Please submit your items to gene.foreman@verizon.net or use the mailbox in the church office.



Church Phone:

610-644-5555

Office E-mail:

officebumc@comcast.net

Church Website:

www.berwynumc.org

LENDING A HAND

Jan. 4

Liturgist: Jack Campbell
Ushers: Mike Benton, Ed Denisevicz,
Molly Denisevicz, Chuck Parvin
Children's Message: Pattie Littlewood
Coffee Committee: Romaine Rood,
Joanne Lare, Betsy Newman
Flower Delivery: Judy Fisk
Bulletin Preparation: Pat White

Jan. 11

Liturgist: Ted Jex
Ushers: Gene Foreman, Jim Spofford,
Doug Fuerst, Scott West
Children's Message: Janelle Larson
Coffee Committee: Janelle Larson,
Janet Campbell, Amy Dodds
Flower Delivery: Barbara Borst
Bulletin Preparation: Sue Farina

Jan. 18

Liturgist: Jean West
Ushers: Claudia Sharpless, Ben Cutler,
Eloise Levitt, Scott Phelps
Children's Message: Sue Tiede
Coffee Committee: Gina Phelps,
Nancy Koons, Sue Denisevicz
Flower Delivery: Margi MacKenzie

Jan. 25

Liturgist: Frank Farina
Ushers: Judy Fisk, Jeremy Borelly,
Alan Hess, Tyler Borelly
Children's Message: Amy Dodds
Flower Delivery: Jane McDowell
Bulletin Preparation: Sue Farina

Angels, snowmen and elves are a hit

All the angel costumes have been folded and put away along with the tinsel halos. The Nativity costumes, the cardboard snowmen with glitter, the bright shiny bells and the elf hats are all away, too, waiting to be brought out for the show next year. The Nursery School Holiday Show was a grand success. Lynne Hockenbury, our very talented music teacher, produced another winner. Judith Lang played the piano for us and kept the show bouncing along. The parents were so enthusiastic, loudly cheering every song and speaking part, which gave the children more and more confidence. It is always a special time.

January brings a settling to our days, and we see the children make tremendous strides in the learning process. After the children are back into their routine, we will be having a special week for parent visitation. This is a special time for the children to show their parents what they have learned and more about their special days at school. Yello Dyno, a Stranger/Danger program, will be coming in for the 5-Day children. It is a nonthreatening program that teaches children what to do in a difficult situation.

The school year is now just about halfway over, and many of the 5-Day parents are already telling us how sad they will be to see their children leave BUMNS. It is a special and comforting place for children before they enter the wider world of elementary school.

Ann Bole

Card of Thanks

Dear Berwyn United Methodist Church,

Thank you to all who donated food to the Caring Cupboard here at Trinity Presbyterian Church. Once a month we give a week's worth of groceries to 25 families living in our community. Your generosity is appreciated by us here at Trinity and by the members of our families. May God bless you all. Faithfully,

Peggy Owen



Graduation Day for BUMC staffers Jess and Ryan

Jessica Simmons, the church's children coordinator, and Ryan Benton, the youth coordinator, both graduated magna cum laude from West Chester University on Dec. 14.

Jess received her bachelor of arts degree in elementary education, with a minor in reading and literacy. She recently completed her student-teaching stint at West Bradford Elementary School in the Downingtown School District. Jess hopes to be a substitute teacher until she can find a permanent teaching job in the area. Her parents, Judy and Ken Simmons, were present for her graduation, as were her grandparents, Ken and Sue Simmons, and an aunt and uncle, Lin and Doug Cameron.

Ryan received a bachelor of arts degree in communications studies. He studied television broadcasting at the Park School of Communications at Ithaca College before transferring to West Chester in 2006. His parents, Mike and Pam Benton, attended the graduation along with his grandparents, Norene Benton and the Rev. Robert and Joan Nicholson.

The graduation speaker was Thomas Fillippo, chair of the university's board of trustees, who was active at BUMC in the 1980s and 1990s.

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

Book Club. The Book Club will discuss *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* by Lisa See at its meeting at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 21, at the home of Betsy Lang (610-644-8259). Sally Robie will be the discussion leader. Everyone is invited; call Betsy to let her know you are coming.

United Methodist Men. The United Methodist Men will meet at 8 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 10, in Schick Hall for a hot breakfast and a program. We plan to be out by 9:30. With the January meeting, we will begin a new program series on United Methodist history. Our January speaker will be the Rev. Fred Day, pastor of Old St. George's Church in Philadelphia, who will discuss the establishment of organized Methodism in America, with particular emphasis on the establishment of Old St. George's and Mother Bethel Churches. All men of the church (women are also welcome) are invited to join us for the Food! Fellowship! Speakers! Education!

Sunday Morning Study Group. A study and discussion of Max Lucado's book *3:16, The Numbers of Hope* continues in January. Max Lucado is a best-selling Christian author and minister of writing and preaching at Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, Texas. 3:16 is a reference to the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of John: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." The study group meets on Sunday mornings at 9:15 in the Visitor's Office to the right of the Pastor's Office. Anyone is welcome. Contact Elaine Parvin, Jim Tiede or Mike Benton.

Lydia Circle (United Methodist Women). We will meet at 6 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25, in the Parlor. Make your New Year's Resolution to come check us out!

ETC Class. Make your way to www.7villages.com and look for our ETC Class to read about the faith topics we are discussing. We meet at 9:12 a.m. Sundays in the Library.

Habitat for Humanity, Chester County. Volunteers from our church will be working at house sites in West Chester in January and February. Our dates are Wednesday, Jan. 14, and Wednesday, Feb. 11. The times are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. All levels of experience are welcome. If you prefer volunteering on a Saturday, dates and times are available. Please call or email Sue Farina if you are interested in helping: 610-695-9008 SMFarina@aol.com.

El Salvador Scholarships. Thanks for your response to the request for support for educational scholarships for students who attend our sister church, Roca Eterna. Please make your check out to Berwyn United Methodist Church and earmark it "El Salvador Scholarship." Our deadline is Jan. 4, 2009, as their semester starts in mid-January. Contact Nancy Atchison or Gail Campbell if you have any questions.

Help needed for Lenten Luncheons. Our Lenten Luncheons have been a successful community outreach in past years. Cooks are needed to help prepare a simple meal. We need two or three persons for each of the following dates: March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1 and 8. Menus will be provided, or you can decide your own menu. Contact Nancy Atchison.

Recycling. Have you noticed the blue wastebaskets throughout the building? They are there to help us recycle. A list of what can be placed in those baskets is posted on the communications boards in the narthex and next to Schieck Hall.

Dinner audience will hear speakers on death penalty

The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Church & Society Work Team and the Methodist Federation for Social Action will hear from two speakers on the death penalty at a dinner at 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 23, at the First United Methodist Church of Germantown. One speaker, Ray Krone, spent more than a decade in prison, some of it on death row, before DNA testing cleared his name. He is the 100th former death row inmate freed because of innocence since the reinstatement of capital punishment in the United States in 1976. The second speaker is the Rev. Walter Everett, who came to oppose the death penalty as a result of his personal experience with the murderer of his own son, who had expressed remorse for his crime. The dinner is \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. Send checks made out to MFSA to Margaret Harris, 228 S. 21st St., Philadelphia, PA 19103.