

THE BEACON NEWSLETTER

December 13, 2009

Volume 51, No. 50

<u>LOOKING AHEAD</u>		
December	23	Food Bank Closed
	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
	7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir
	24	7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship
	30	Food Bank Closed
		No Choir Practice
	31	12:00 Church Office Closes
		New Year's Eve at Camp Mack
January	1	Church Office Closed

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE Adult and Children's Sunday School at 10:00 a.m.

Next Week—December 20, 2009

Fourth Sunday of Advent
9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Worship
"A God who thinks outside of the box"

Christmas is all about seeing things differently. Breaking traditional images. Thinking outside the box. Especially the gift box. We don't look at Christmas that way much today. After all, humanity has had 2000 Christmases to build traditions and a cultural ethos around the holiday. Today it seems a pretty standard event, with the gifts and the tree, the shepherd, the wise ones, and the stable in the nativity. But what is ho-hum in our time was earth shattering in the first century. Two women, Elizabeth and Mary, taking center stage. The son of God, "royalty" born in such humble surroundings. A child as a symbol of faith, drawing foreign travelers from afar. No armies standing at attention. No trumpets blaring. No grand decrees for the prince of peace. Just a manger. Just a lowly barn. Just a God who thinks outside of the box.

This reflection causes us to consider an important question near Christmas. If God broke down barriers and expectations around Christmas 2000 years ago, then what is God capable of doing today? And how do we see the love of God expressed as a result of it?

Join us in worship for the fourth Sunday in Advent as we ponder the progression of the season through the choral reading at the 9:00 service and a clown skit at the 11:15 service. You are invited to read Luke 1: 39-55 in preparation for this worship experience.

POTATO BAR FUNDRAISER (yum!) TODAY AFTER WORSHIP FOLLOWED BY 1 P.M. COUNCIL MEETING!

Advent Building the Bridge Classes

December 13-27: *Simply Wait*
Location: South Classroom
Facilitated by Nancy Eikenberry
 Anticipation, Hope, Patience, Obedience. This advent class will guide you in finding time for holy anticipation during the advent season. The book, *Simply Wait*, provides opportunities for daily meditation, prayer and space for journaling.

December 13, 20: *Caring Crafts for Advent*
Location: Parlor
Facilitated by Phyllis Hall and Linda Myers
 We will have supplies available and instruction on how to make embroidery on paper Christmas cards with a variety of design options, and fabric Christmas cards that look like quilts, on both Sundays.

If you have questions regarding Beacon information, please contact the church office between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

**THIS WEEK AT
BEACON HEIGHTS**

Today

12:15 p.m. Potato Bar Youth Fundraiser
1:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting

Wednesday

6:00 p.m. Bell Choir
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

Thursday

12:30 p.m. Spirit Journey Women

Friday

6:30 a.m. Early Breakfast Group

Saturday

Food Bank Workers:

Mary Whitehead
Marylane and Tom Coursen

Beacon Heights Church believes everyone is a child of God. We welcome all people, of any age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, family status, socio-economic status, physical ability, mental ability, or place along their faith journey.

THE BEACON

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STATISTICS

Sunday December 6, 2009

9:00 Worship	82
10:00 Building the Bridge	100
11:15 Worship	85
Adult Offerings	\$6,066.00
Children's Offering	\$.00
Weekly Budget	\$7,277.00



Christmas Eve Offering Announcement

Our 2009 Advent theme is “Return to us the hope, joy, peace, love and light of Bethlehem.” Luke’s Gospel tells us that Joseph returned to his hometown – his place of origin. Most of us, as we think of where we grew up, experience fond memories and a deep sense of thankfulness.

This year, as we anticipate Christmas, we return to places we hold dear in our faith journey. In particular we remember two places that have been foundational for our community of faith. The first is Palestine, the birthplace of Christianity through Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem. The second is Virginia, the home of John Kline (an early spiritual leader of our denomination), who died for his faithful witness to the way of Jesus.

Our 2009 Christmas Eve offering will be shared with 1) Christian Peacemaker Teams as they work for peace and justice in the land of Jesus’ birth (and elsewhere) and 2) with the John Kline Homestead Preservation Trust as they invite visitors to remember the faith of prior generations as inspiration for today.

**Safe Church Training
Sunday, January 3, 2010
Following the 11:15 service until 2:00 p.m.
Lunch will be provided.**

ALL who work with children and youth in the congregation and have not previously attended a training are encouraged* to attend. This training will include conversation about how to report any incidents of harm as well as appropriate relationships and boundaries.

Please RSVP by December 29 to the church office.

Contact Pastor Melissa, if you have any questions.

*According to our Safe Church Policy (adopted in 2007), this is REQUIRED for everyone who works with children and youth.



Handmade Christmas Decorations Available

Leland Harding has volunteered to make up a bow or bows for Christmas decorating. You provide him with the ribbon of your choosing and pay a freewill donation to the High School youth fund to be used toward National Youth Conference. There are also centerpieces (priced as marked) on the tables in the fellowship hall set up for the potato bar fundraiser which are for sale. Talk to Leland if you have questions.



Christmas Eve Cookies Needed

You're invited to bake, or purchase cookies for the reception after the Christmas Eve worship service. A dozen or two would be most appreciated. They can be left labeled in the kitchen or brought Christmas Eve. Nancy and Steve Eikenberry will host.

An Advent Message from the Pastoral Team

This year as Advent returns, we join with you in seeking the return of the hope, joy, peace, love, and light of Bethlehem. We recognize that in our own world, just as at Jesus' birth, these wonderful aspects of life exist side by side with pain, struggle, discouragement, conflict, and sorrow. Here we are, many of us struggling perhaps a bit more this year than others – emotionally, economically, even spiritually; struggling and longing for a sense of God's care.

In returning to the age-old stories of Jesus' birth, we discover new awareness of God's love and presence in our living. We find the grace of this season filling us with a joy and hope that is not connected to the circumstances of our lives, but comes alive in the mystery of God-with-us.

In the midst of life, we return to the stories of Jesus' own Advent -- the stories which call us to reflect on what is truly important in life, to be attentive to the freshness of God's coming among us, to bring our gifts of praise and devotion to the Holy One. Here – and now - these stories guide us as a community of faith to return to the foundations of who we are to be – a beacon of God's love in this world.

As your pastoral team, we continue to celebrate the Spirit who lives within this congregation - a Holy Spirit of generosity and compassion, of commitment to justice-seeking and healing-service to those around us. We are humbled, yet thankful for the opportunity to share this journey with you, and we welcome God's stirring within this body, leading us into a shared vision of God's Shalom amid the challenges of this time.

Giving God thanks for the community that receives and shares the Love born anew among us,

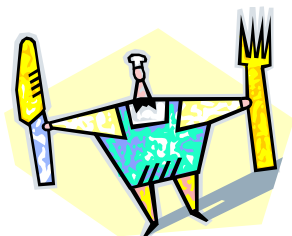
Pastor Jan *Pastor Melissa* *Pastor John*
Pastor Brian

YOUTH

High School

Council Lunch Fundraiser

TODAY



Saturday 12/12: 10a.m.-Noon

Prepare potatoes and other food, set up tables, etc.

Sunday 12/13: 10a.m. – 2:30p.m.

Final preparations for lunch, serving and clean-up.



All youth hoping to go to National Youth Conference are expected to help in all these times!

NEWS

Middle School

TODAY

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH CAROLING

1:00 - 4:00 P.M.

Youth are encouraged to eat lunch WITH THEIR FAMILIES at the HS youth potato bar fundraiser. Please bring a free-will donation for this fundraiser.



Following lunch, youth will make Christmas cards to deliver in the neighborhood as we carol. Please dress appropriately to be outside for at least an hour.

Invite your mentors!