

STREAM LINES



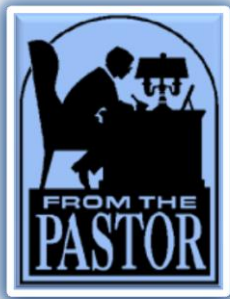
A Monthly Publication of the First Presbyterian
Church of Avenel, New Jersey



DECEMBER 2010

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December 2010

"Celebrating Advent means being able to wait. Waiting is an art that our impatient age has forgotten. It wants to break open the ripe fruit when it has hardly finished planting the shoot. But all too often greedy eyes are only deceived: the fruit that seemed so precious is still green on the inside, and disrespectful hands ungratefully toss aside what has so disappointed them. Whoever does not know the austere blessedness of waiting—that is, of hopefully doing without—will never experience the full blessing of fulfillment... For the greatest, most profound, tenderest things in the world, we must wait."

--Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, Amerika* 1928-1931
(trans. O.C. Dean, Jr.)

Bonhoeffer knew a thing or two about waiting. As a German theologian who resisted the Nazi government during World War II, he was imprisoned, and eventually executed, in a concentration camp. I have no doubt that *waiting*, for him, was profoundly painful. Waiting for rescue... waiting for death... waiting for the suffering to end... And yet, Bonhoeffer describes waiting as "austere blessedness," the art of "hopefully doing without."

Waiting is not at the top of my spiritual gifts inventory. I'll admit that I'm usually one of those offenders Bonhoeffer writes about, tearing open fruit that hasn't ripened, and ungratefully tossing it

aside. But my own shortcomings aside, I suspect that *waiting* is more of a discipline than a natural inclination. And like all of those spiritual disciplines: *prayer, fasting, scripture reading, giving, etc.*, through our work of faith, we find ourselves experiencing the joy of Christ more profoundly.

Waiting is that time, that window that exists, between when the hope of something first sparks in our minds and when it is finally realized. The more I think about Bonhoeffer's notion—that one cannot experience "the full blessing of fulfillment" unless they are disciplined enough to wait—the more I'm realizing it's true in my own life. And most of the time it seems that God speaks to me *the loudest* during the waiting. *Why?* I think it's because *that* is where faith is at its most powerful. Hebrews 11:1 reminds us that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Advent is about the wait. It's about "hopefully doing without." And it is precisely in the waiting that God grows our faith. The Israelites cried out for thousands of years, "How long, O LORD, must we wait for your deliverance?" And as we wait for the second coming of Christ, we've been asking, "How long, O LORD, must we wait for your deliverance?" At the first Christmas, Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes. At the second Christmas, He will be wrapped in garments of light. In His first coming, He suffered death on a cross and, at His second coming, He will descend from heaven in glory. And through the *waiting*, God has been *preparing us* for the ultimate fulfillment of the ultimate hope: resurrection and the coming of God's kingdom. And all creation "waits with eager longing" (Romans 8) for *this* Advent to end.

This Advent, I will be paying attention to the wait. As Christmas draws near, I will remember the psalmist's words: "Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and shield" (Psalm 33:20). I will use this time to reflect on the Great Advent we are all living through, as we eagerly await the consummation of all created reality—the great Day of the LORD, where we will "*experience the full blessing of fulfillment...[and will truly comprehend that] for the greatest, most profound, tenderest things in the world, we must wait.*"

Have a blessed Advent and a fulfilling Christmas.

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Jason

STREAM LINES INFORMATION

**The deadline for the January 2011 issue of Stream Lines will be
Wednesday, December 22, 2010 at 12:00 noon.**

Remember to email your articles to:

Susan Smolsky at streamlines@comcast.net and
Carol Palmer at avenelpres@verizon.net

**From the
Editor**



The January issue will be available for online reading and printing on or about Wednesday, December 29, 2010 and will be available to those who have no internet service and pick up their copies in the Sanctuary on Sunday, January 2, 2011.



Please Join Us and Celebrate the Birth of Christ!

Family Christmas Eve Service

Friday, December 24, 2010
3:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Candlelight Service

Friday, December 24, 2010
11:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary



Live Nativity

REMINDER

Please join us for our traditional Live Nativity on Sunday, December 12, 2010 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the Sanctuary grounds. This live depiction of the birth of Christ continues to be a favorite with our community and church members alike. Don't miss it!

A NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM – AN INTERACTIVE WALK

- REMINDER -

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sunday, December 19, 2010

Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and close at 8:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church of Avenel

Christian Education Building

Kirk Street Entrance, Avenel, NJ



A Night in Bethlehem is a hands-on family experience, suitable for children of all ages, hosted by the Avenel Presbyterian Church, where families can take a craft-filled journey through Bethlehem on the night of Jesus' birth. Each family will have the opportunity to hear about the artisans of the time and create a craft.

Come One – Come All!!

And bring your friends and neighbors. There is something for everyone!



Christmas Concert/Christmas Luncheon

Sunday, December 12, 2010

Join us for our annual Christmas Concert during the morning worship service on Sunday, December 12, 2010.

Immediately following the morning worship service, please join us for our annual Christmas Luncheon in Jacob Morgan Hall.



The Deacons would like to thank everyone for their generosity to help fill our Thanksgiving Baskets. It was well received and appreciated. It is an overwhelming feeling to get a smile and a "thank you" when you help others less fortunate than yourself.

Joan Benkert, Deacon



Christmas Caroling

Monday, December 20, 2010

Last year's Christmas Caroling was a great success and lots of fun – so we are doing it again this year! We will be going Christmas Caroling on Monday, December 20, 2010 to the Menlo Park Veterans Home, Maplewood Manor and church shut-ins. We will meet in the Church parking lot at 6:00 p.m. Following caroling, we will be returning to the Tucker home for refreshments.

Come join us!

OCTOBER SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



At the regular October Session meeting on October 19, the Elders:

- Approved the Church Budget for 2011, except for the Pastor's salary package, which requires approval by the congregation.
- Approved the request of the Woodbridge Basketball program to use the gym on Friday evenings from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., contingent on a church member agreeing to supervise the use.
- Approved recommendations from the Property Care Committee to hold a Fall Clean-Up Day on November 20th and to award a contract to BC Contractor and Roofing LLC to undertake roof repairs on the Chapel, gym and CE Building roofs at a cost of \$24,700.00.
- Approved the slate of officers to be presented to the congregation for action on October 31.



THE PONY EXPRESS STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN UPDATE!!

As of November 9, we have received 93 estimates of giving totaling more than \$121,000 for 2011! This represents an increase of approximately \$20,000 compared to 2010. Thank you to all who continue to faithfully support our church.

Our programs, missions and building maintenance require continuous funding. It's important to cheerfully return the bounty we have received from the Lord. Praise be to God!

The Baking Table wishes to thank everyone who donated the very appetizing breads, cookies, cakes and pies for our Annual Holiday Fair. Once again, through your efforts, we were a big success.

Thank You!

Joan, Bobbie, Vonne



Property Care Newsletter

Minutes of the Property Care Committee Meeting Held on November 2, 2010



The meeting was opened with prayer by Bruce McKee at 7:40 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Manse

1. Waterproof painting in basement back room needed; work party needs to be set up.
2. Hallway by cellar needs painting.
3. Shelf to be installed over washer and dryer in basement.
4. Outside electrical plug on porch not aligned - **John**.

Sanctuary

A special meeting of the Session was called on Sunday, November 7, to approve the recommendation from Property Care that BC Contractor and Roofing LLC repair the Sanctuary roof by cutting out the bad section down the center trench and repairing with a rubber material - Karnak. Cost to cover and patch would be \$5,100.00. This work will be performed within the next couple of weeks.

CE Building

1. Light in kitchen needs ballast - **Gary and Bruce** with **John's** help; one fixed, one pending.
2. Sink in girls room is leaking - **Bruce/Gary** to look at.

Ken Hunt Lounge

Gay to check with Worldwide Flooring on Route 1 for recommendation on cleaning floor tiles.

Gym

1. Gym back double doors broken - **Rich** - initial estimate about \$2,000 to bring it up to code; Rich getting another estimate.
2. A smoke detector is needed in the gym. **John** will hardwire the smoke detector.
3. Per Avenel Fire Inspector, panic bars and closers need to be added to the main door from the hallway to the gym. Must be completed or partly completed by **December fire inspection**. **Rich** has checked with Avenel Locksmith and Accurate Locksmith.

Lawn Maintenance/Snow Plowing

1. Edger needs to be repaired.
2. **Rich** received estimates for 2011 lawn maintenance from Expert Lawn Service, Greener Solutions Landscaping, Jensen Landscaping, and Hedgehog Landscaping. A decision will be made for the 2011 lawn service in the near future.
3. **Rich** getting estimates for snow plowing for winter. Last year's contract was with Greener Solutions Landscaping, but also getting estimates from Green View and Expert.
4. Annual Fall Clean-up will be held Saturday, November 20th at 9:00 a.m. **Bruce** contacted Jim Lawrence from the Boy Scouts and there will be six to eight scouts to help with our fall clean-up.

Jacob Morgan Hall

1. Door (by kitchen) to JMH fell off. **Gary** looking at for repair/replacement. Must have panic bar and closers added per Fire Inspector.
2. Closers and panic bars need to be added to the double doors from JMH into Chapel hallway.

Roofs

BC Contractor and Roofing LLC completed the following roof work:

- **Gym Roof** - patch and coat with 5 year Karnak aluminum coating with fiber. Fix the mushy part of the roof.
- **Westminster Hall Roof** - Patch rubber roof and build up with insulation so it drains.
- **Hallway Roof and Porch Roof** - coat and repair rotten plywood on porch ceiling.
- **Chapel Roof** - replace missing slates, realign and reset loose slates, fix snow guards and bent gutter by Westminster Hall.
- **CE Building** - replace missing shingles over Room 19 and Senior High Room.

Total Cost \$24,700.

Fundraisers are being proposed to include various events - *e.g.*, Moment for Mission announcements, pancake breakfasts, dinners, dances, etc.

In addition, the Committee will need to meet with the Finance Committee to **develop a plan** for the upcoming 2011 budget and future budgets to build up capital funds so that when a major repair is needed, the monies are already available.

Recycles

Rich and Ralph cleaned up the recyclable area behind the gym. The Food Pantry needs to be sure that the cardboard is being broken down and put in the recycle blue bin.

NEW BUSINESS

A volunteer is needed to do the monthly safety check of our fire extinguishers, exit signs, CO2 detectors - **John**

FUTURE PROJECTS

Manse

1. Back porch painting - 2nd coat on walls and ceiling
2. Painting back porch floor deck
3. Tree by Manse to be removed - Treeminator
4. Gutter Guards - **Gary** - Spring 2011
5. Power Washing - Spring 2011
6. Rear Steps - cosmetic work - coincide with replacement of driveway and sidewalk
7. Replacement of driveway and sidewalk

Chapel

Chapel steps need to be repaired/replaced (temporary fix for safety completed in October). Look at for 2011/2012 timeframe.

The meeting was closed in prayer by Rick Severyn.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gay Patrouch

Committee Members: Frank Battito, Rich Culton, John Hogan, Bruce McKee, Gay Patrouch, Ralph Price, Bob Ragan, Joan Ross, Rick Severyn and Gary Stevenson

HIS HANDS COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY
Making a Difference in Our Community



November 2010

On the beautiful fall evening of October 26, 2010, eighty (80) bags of donated clothing were sorted. Gay Patrouch, Graciela Goyco, Kathy Sturtz, Carolyn Gilligan (aka Gillawanie), and Jackie Turnbull were the work/joy crew for the evening. Thirty-four (34) bags of clothing were passed along to A&E Clothing Corp. and four (4) bags were designated as Torn and Dirty.

The Clothes Closet was open on October 30th with Joan Benkert, Kathy Sturtz, Gayle Nolan (new recruit☺), Holly Ely (new recruit☺) and Graciela Goyco helping the clients sign in, make selections, pack clothing and keep the Closet clean and organized. We have a large Spanish speaking clientele and Graciela has been a great help in interpreting. Thirty-six (36) families came to the Closet shopping for 91 family members. Seven new families signed up for the Clothes Closet.

Four new Z racks have been purchased for the Clothes Closet with His Hands Ministry funds for \$512.50. These Z racks are wonderful, heavy duty garment racks. Bill McLachlan has installed the casters on the men's shoe rack. THANK YOU, Bill!

Some long-time Clothes Closet helpers are beginning to get a little weary, so there is need for some changing of the guards. Please pray for interest in this ministry to grow among some of the newer church attendees. Pray for my wisdom in guiding His Hands Ministry as the Lord would desire.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Severyn



Worship Committee Report
November 2010

At our last meeting, the committee finalized plans for the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service on November 23, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. Several area choirs will be joining our Chancel Choir in singing two anthems. Refreshments will be served immediately following the service.

Planning began for the Advent season. We will be calling families to light the Advent candles. All Elders and Deacons are invited to join the Worship Committee in decorating our Sanctuary for Christmas on December 2, 2010 at 5:45 p.m.

We will be going Christmas Caroling on Monday, December 20, 2010, to the Menlo Park Veterans Home, Maplewood Manor and church shut-ins. We will meet in the Church parking lot at 6:00 p.m. Following caroling, we will be returning to the Tucker home for refreshments.

This year's Christmas Concert will be incorporated into the Worship service on Sunday, December 12, 2010. Please join us after worship for a luncheon in Jacob Morgan Hall.

Your Worship Committee
Carolyn Gilligan, Gayle Nolan, Carol Palmer and Lynne Merz (Deacon Representative)



Memorial Committee Meeting Minutes November 4, 2010

The meeting opened in prayer at 7:15 p.m.

We discussed how well we thought the Dedication Service and luncheon went. We have gotten very positive feedback about it.

I sent out 8 bulletins and DVDs to those that requested them because they were unable to attend. Also a letter praising Jason and the service he gave and invited them to attend our church if they are ever in this area.

We sent a check for \$25 to Audio/Visual Fund to help pay for the extra DVDs Randy made for us.

We had to purchase a new Memorial Book as the 2nd one is now filled to capacity. Robbie Olah will continue to enter the names of deceased and those that donated in their memory. She only has 5 more years to catch up.

We discussed the landscaping of sign and note from Tom Cordero of Expert Landscaping. He told me that next time we need flowers to let him know and he can get them at wholesale. Will do that in the spring.

We discussed ideas for the next Dedication.

We also discussed the rule about putting names on Memorials. There is mixed information on that. No one seems to be able to find the ruling.

The meeting closed in prayer at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carolyn Stockl

Christian Education Committee Meeting Minutes November 8, 2010

Kathy Sturtz opened the meeting with prayer.

Sunday School attendance is down, but Jackie feels confident it will pick up with the end of football season. The Sunday School computer needs repair. Jackie will have it fixed. There was concern about the Indonesian Church kids running through the building while their parents are at worship. We will continue to observe and see if instruction from Session is being followed. There is a need to update our Child Safety Program. We will begin next month looking at material and discuss what we need to do to make our children as safe as possible in the church environment. We discussed hiring 2 seminary interns for next year. Jason has discovered that we can hire 2 interns next year for less than what we are now paying one. One intern will work with the Junior/Senior High students, and one will work with our young children in Kindergarten thru 5th Grade.

Adult Sunday School is poorly attended but Jason feels we should continue to offer it.

Adult Bible Study remains a small group but there is lively discussion with those who do attend. 2X4 Bible study has 4-6 faithfully attending.

Junior/Senior High Fellowships: In mid-October, there were 22 youth that came out to Fellowship. They have an average of 11 youth attending each week. They will continue to meet thru the first week of December then resume meeting in January. A ski trip is planned for January 7-9. Plans are to extend the fellowship time to 8:30.



Mommy & Me Fellowship continues to meet every other Thursday. Jackie is pleased with how the group is doing.

Toddler Care during the Sunday School hour is for children who have a parent in Adult Sunday School or their parent is a Sunday School teacher.

It is the same few who are doing Toddler Care during worship. One parent did toddler care 3 weeks in a row, missing worship because Jessica could not get volunteers. We will make a plea during announcements.

Abigail Ragan is doing well with scheduling volunteers for Adventures.

We will order curriculum for VBS in January and after the holidays will start to look for a coordinator.

Elders will be asked to pay for the retreat by the first week in January. Jason will be contacting Pastor Ray (retreat leader) and Ed Benkert to plan the itinerary for the retreat.

We have received the books, "Love Came Down at Christmas," which will be passed out at A Night in Bethlehem.

Ed Benkert has agreed to teach this year's Communicants class. Jason will contact him and set up starting date and curriculum. Communicants will be received into the church on Easter Sunday.

The Pancake Supper is set for Tuesday, March 8, 2011.

Pastor Tucker closed the meeting with prayer.



Our Military Servicemen, Servicewomen and Their Families

Rev. Adam Tietje, Brian Ragas, Daniel Hedner, Jovan Diaz, Anthony Battito, Justin Kitchen, Edward Merz, Michael Warren, Lauren K. Pfeifer, Bryan Palmer, Amy Updike, Robert Bartko, Michael Barany

**FREEDOM ISN'T FREE.
SOMEBODY PAID.**



Jolan Farkas, Eleanor Smith, Toni Anderson,
Linda Bisgaard and Edith Cloldt

Prayer Requests

To add someone to this list, please
call the Church Office at
732-634-1631



Recent Concerns

Ron McKee (son of Bruce and Jane), John Hrunka (friend of Pat and Frank Battito), Eric LaGrand (neighbor of Julie Cahill), Betty Martino (friend of Carol Palmer), Bobby Jorgenson (friend of Carolyn Stevenson), Pete Allebach, Jamie Siciliano (relative of Adrienne Pizzuto), Marjorie Speath (sister of Barbara Morgan), Francis Bradley (friend of Kathy McKelligett), Eleanor Smith, Sue (friend of Carol Palmer), Sterlacci Family, Kacie Turnbull

Those with On-Going Long-Term Concerns

Edward and Betty Dobson, Jennifer Perez, Dorothy Piperi (mother of Carolyn Gilligan's co-worker), Diana Dydak, Jeremy Hogan, Don Gilligan, Esther Nielsen, Phil Prasser, Marjorie Speath (sister of Barbara Morgan), Josephine DeVito (mother of Carol Palmer), Tessa Campbell (niece of Arleen Schreiber)

Christmas Poinsettias and Greetings

Once again our Sanctuary will be decorated for Christmas. Poinsettia plants will be obtained from Floral Expressions at a cost of \$10 per plant. If you wish your poinsettia donation to be in honor or in memory of a loved one, please designate the name(s) when placing your request. If you would like to make a contribution to the church for music or in lieu of sending Christmas cards to church family and friends, you may do that as well on the form below.

Poinsettia plants may be taken after the evening worship service on Friday, December 24, 2010 by those who donated them.

Please have all donations and requests in the Church Office no later than **Monday, December 13, 2010.**



PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Your Name: _____

Number of Poinsettias _____ Total \$ _____ (\$10 each) Music \$ _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Greetings From: _____

\$ _____

Christmas Joy Offering

Presbyterians have long celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ by giving generously to a Christmas season offering. Fifty percent of the receipts of the Christmas Joy Offering are distributed to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs that provide support to retired and active church workers and their spouses and families. The other fifty percent supports Presbyterian-related racial ethnic education through the General Assembly Mission Council.

Please send your Christmas Joy Offering contribution to the Church Office at 621 E. Woodbridge Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001 or place it in the offering plate during the morning worship service on Sunday, December 19, 2010. Please mark your envelope "Christmas Joy Offering."



Be the light and change individual lives, families and communities through your contribution.

*Warmest Christmas Greetings From
the Stream Lines Online Staff*



*Susan Smolsky, Carol Palmer
and Cathy Shaffer*

*A Blessed Christmas to All
from the Church Staff*



*Rev. Jason P. Tucker, Lenore Turner,
Carol Palmer, Francesco Santelli and
Ron McGarry with volunteers Cathy
Shaffer, Robbie Olah and John
Guarracino*



CHURCH OFFICE HOLIDAY HOURS

The Church Office will be closed on Friday,
December 24 and Monday, December 27
for the Christmas holiday.



CHURCH OFFICE HOLIDAY HOURS

The Church Office will be closed on Monday,
January 3, 2011 for the
New Year holiday.



A Website of Interest

Rest Ministries, Inc. is a non-profit Christian organization that exists to serve people who live with chronic illness or pain, and their families, by providing spiritual, emotional, relational and practical support through a variety of programs and resources.

It also seeks to bring awareness and a change in action throughout churches in the United States in regard to how people who live with chronic illness or pain are served, and teach churches effective ministry tools in ministering to this population. One tool for this purpose is National Invisible Chronic Illness Awareness Week, of which Rest Ministries is the founder and sponsor.

Please visit <http://restministries.com> for more information and to access all this site has to offer or speak with Carolyn Stockl.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

	12/03/10 thru 12/28/10	Woodbridge Township Annual Holiday Train Display – Barron Arts Center – Admission Free – Monday thru Friday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Saturday and Sunday 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Friday	12/03/10	Annual Woodbridge Township Tree Lighting Ceremony – 5:00 p.m. at the Barron Arts Center, followed by a Holiday Concert, featuring the New Horizons Band of Woodbridge, at the Woodbridge Center Mall at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday	12/05/10	50 th Annual Woodbridge Township Holiday Parade – 1:30 p.m. – Downtown Woodbridge – Rain Date: Sunday, December 12
Sunday	12/12/10	1. Christmas Concert – during the morning worship service 2. Christmas Luncheon – Jacob Morgan Hall immediately following the morning worship service 3. Live Nativity – 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the church property
Monday	12/13/10	Christmas poinsettia gifts/greetings due
Sunday	12/19/10	1. Christmas Joy Offering collection 2. A Night in Bethlehem, an Interactive Walk – 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Gym – Open to the public
Wednesday	12/22/10	Stream Lines deadline at 12:00 noon
Friday	12/24/10	1. Family Christmas Eve Service – 3:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary 2. Candlelight Service – 11:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary
Friday and Monday	12/24/10 and 12/27/10	Church Office Closed for the Christmas holiday
Monday	01/03/11	Church Office Closed for New Year's Day

**MINUTES of the
CONGREGATIONAL/CORPORATION MEETING
First Presbyterian Church of Avenel
October 31, 2010**



The semi-annual meeting of the Congregation was called to order at 11:45 AM in the church sanctuary with prayer by the Moderator, Rev. Jason P. Tucker.

After finding the Call of the meeting to be in order, and establishing that a quorum of the membership was present, Rev. Tucker proceeded with the meeting.

Rev. Tucker reminded the attendees that only active members were permitted to participate in any vote, and that candidates for offices required a majority of active members present and voting to be elected.

Rev. Tucker asked for the report of the Nominating Committee from Chairperson Elder Wayne Collins.

Nominations for Elder/Trustee
were as follows:

2 YEAR TERM (Class of 2012)

J. Bruce McKee

3 YEAR TERM (Class of 2013)

Richard Culton

Pat Battito

William McLachlan

Vacant

Vacant

Nominations for Deacon were as
follows:

2 YEAR TERM (Class of 2012)

Linda Sammartino

3 YEAR TERM (Class of 2013)

Mary Ann Lombardi

Jane McKee

Hanna Culton

Huguette Exantus

Vacant

Nominees for a one-year term
as members of the Nominating
Committee were:

Edward Benkert

Wilmer Allebach

Delia Culton

Ed Benkert was nominated for a one year term as Treasurer.

Wayne Dubin was nominated for a three year term (Class of 2013) on the Auditing Committee.

There being no nominations from the floor for any offices, on motion and second nominations were closed. Since the number of positions equaled the number of nominees, no written ballot was required for the vote. **On motion and second, and the slate of officers was elected unanimously.**

The Moderator presented the proposed church budget for 2011. He explained that Session had approved the budget as presented except for the Pastor's salary package. Questions about specific line items were answered by Elder Wayne Dubin, Church Treasurer Ed Benkert and the Moderator.

The Moderator then excused himself from the meeting and appointed the Clerk of Session, Elder Kurowsky as Moderator Pro Tem to allow the congregation to act on the Pastor's salary. **On motion and second, the congregation approved the Pastor's salary package as presented.**

On motion and second, the budget was received.

On motion and second, the business of the Congregational meeting was suspended for the purpose of opening a meeting of the Corporation.

Elder Dubin, Finance Committee Chairperson and Corporation President, moderated the meeting. There being no business to come before the Corporation, **on motion and second, the meeting of the Corporation was adjourned and business resumed on the Congregational meeting.**

Old Business

The Moderator called on Elder Ryan Miller to present the report of the 2009 Auditing Committee. He indicated that the audit had been completed and revealed no major errors or problems and **on motion and second, the report was received.**

New Business

Several members of the congregation noted that there had been issues regarding building security including unlocked doors, and lights and heat being left on. A suggestion was made that consideration be given to providing renters with a written checklist of items to be taken care of when leaving the building. Church members should also be more diligent about securing the building after meetings, etc. This issue will be forwarded to the Building Usage Committee for consideration.

There being no further business to properly come before the meeting, it was closed with prayer by the Moderator at 12:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles P. Kurowsky
Clerk of Session



Finance Committee Update

The Finance Committee is thrilled to report that our reserves have stabilized and over the last six months are now increasing. Over the last five plus years we saw an erosion of our financial condition. There were a number of reasons for this deterioration, the primary ones being the decline in membership and the pastoral changes that have taken place. We were nervous and apprehensive about taking on necessary property maintenance items and growing important programs in our church life. Now we are so pleased and blessed to see this financial turnaround and we want everyone to know that the church's balance sheet is improving! We are especially grateful for the gift from the estate of George Shaffer, our long-time Financial Secretary and Finance Committee member, whose gift helped fund all of the needed roof repairs. God Bless you George. Thank you to Ed Benkert, our Treasurer, for all the great work he's done over the past two years. And we welcome a new Financial Secretary, Gay Patrouch. Thank you Gay for taking on this most important responsibility.

Wayne S. Dubin
Chair, Finance Committee

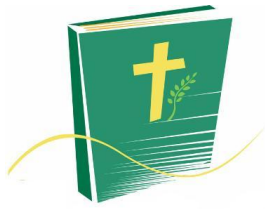
75+ CHRISTMAS CANDY

A special treat for our members who are 75 and older – The deacons will be distributing holiday candy to these members during the month of December.

The Deacons wish everyone a very Merry Christmas
and a healthy, happy New Year.

Mary Ann Miller,
Secretary for the Deacons





December Memory Verse

1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

"The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."



Transferred to the Church Triumphant

October 2010 – **Paule Perlewitz**, beloved sister of Gisela Olsen and loved one of the entire family.



Thought of the Month

Every time you turn green with envy, you are ripe for trouble.

December Birthdays

If there are any omissions or errors in the December birthday list, please contact the Church Office at 732-634-1631.
Thank you!



- 01 Carolyn Gilligan, Carol Maye
- 02 Steven Smolsky, Albert Knapp, Jr.
- 03 Lindsey Gilligan
- 09 Arleen Schreiber, Taylor Fowler, III
- 10 Nick Altieri
- 12 Rick Severyn, Michale Wattie
- 13 Chizoba Usuwa
- 15 Frederick Mock
- 16 William Dodich, Ariana Blatt, Sarah Rasimowicz
- 17 LaVerne Doll, Debra Tarby
- 18 Ralph Price, Larry Palmer, Dylan Miller
- 19 Ann Wetzel
- 21 Howard Hulsizer
- 27 Audreyann Rasimowicz, Gay Patrouch
- 28 George Goldsmith
- 30 Helen Poulsen
- 31 Judith Englert, Bobbie Altieri



I prefer fall and winter, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape – the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show.

- Andrew Wyeth -



A Small White Envelope

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past 10 years or so.

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas – oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it: overspending; the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma; the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school he attended. And shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes. As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears.

It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford. Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. And as each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat.

Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly. "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them."

Mike loved kids – all kids – and he knew them, having coached Little League, football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came.

That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed the envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition – one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on.

The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents.

As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure. The story doesn't end there.

You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning, it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelope.

Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

Written by Nancy W. Gavin

First Published in *Woman's Day* on December 14, 1982

Visit <http://whiteenvelopeproject.org> for more information in this true story

COMIC RELIEF

"A cheerful heart is good medicine...." Proverbs 17:22

A Question of Ownership

Some years ago a New Orleans lawyer sought a direct Veterans Administration loan for a client. He was told that the loan would be approved if he could provide proof of clear title to the property offered as collateral. The title for the property in question was complicated, and he spent a considerable amount of time reviewing all pertinent documents back to 1803. Satisfied with the depth and expanse of his examination, he submitted the information to the V.A. He soon received this reply from the V.A.:

"We received your letter today enclosing application for a loan for your client, supported by abstract of title. The application forms are complete, but you have not cleared the title before the year 1803. Therefore, before full review and possible approval can be accorded the application, it will be necessary that the title be cleared back before that year."

Annoyed, the lawyer wrote the V.A.:

"Your letter regarding titles in case #9378329 received. I note that you wish titles extended further back than I have presented. Your attention is invited to the following information to update your records for the property prior to 1803:

a) I was unaware that any educated person would not know that the United States gained clear title to Louisiana from France in 1803. This title transfer was a result of a real estate transaction known as The Louisiana Purchase.

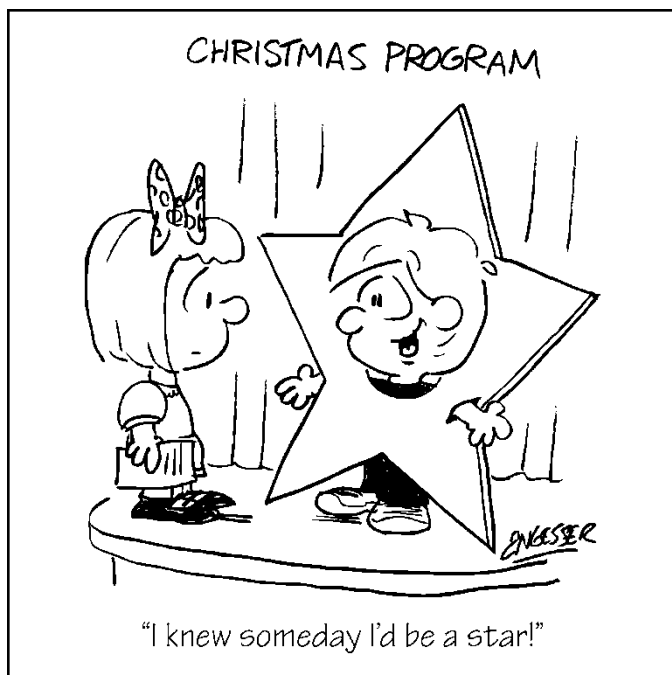
b) France gained clear title to Louisiana by right of conquest from Spain under the Treaty of San Ildefonso (1800).

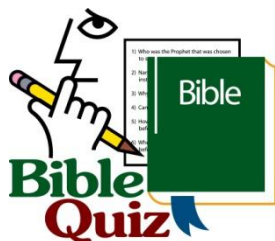
c) The land came into the possession of Spain by right of discovery in 1492 by a sailor named Christopher Columbus. He was acting on behalf of Isabella, Queen of Spain, and had her permission to claim newly discovered lands for Spain.

d) The good Queen, being a pious woman and careful about titles -- almost as careful as the V.A. -- took the precaution of securing the blessing of the Pope before authorizing the voyage.

e) The Pope is a servant of God; God created the world.

f) Therefore, I believe that it is safe to presume that God created title to that part of the world called Louisiana and thus was the original holder of the property in question."





Monthly Bible Trivia Quiz

See how well you did by
finding the answers
elsewhere in this newsletter

Category: Jesus Christ
Quiz Title: The Birth of Jesus

-
1. Where was Jesus born?
 - a) Nazareth
 - b) Bethlehem
 - c) Jerusalem
 - d) Jericho
 2. How many wise men does the Bible say came to visit Jesus?
 - a) Two
 - b) Three
 - c) Four
 - d) It doesn't say
 3. How did the wise men know that the King of the Jews had been born?
 - a) They saw a star in the East
 - b) They had a vision
 - c) Angels told them
 - d) They guessed
 4. Which of the following is not a gift that the wise men brought for Jesus?
 - a) Gold
 - b) Silver
 - c) Myrrh
 - d) Frankincense
 5. Who else came to visit Jesus?
 - a) Carpenters
 - b) Farmers
 - c) Shepherds
 - d) Merchants
 6. Who was Jesus descended from?
 - a) King Saul
 - b) King David
 - c) Jeremiah
 - d) Moses
 7. Who said "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men?"
 - a) Mary
 - b) Angels
 - c) Wise men
 - d) Elisabeth
 8. Which prophet said, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son."
 - a) Isaiah
 - b) Jeremiah
 - c) Ezekiel
 - d) Daniel
 9. In what month of Elizabeth's pregnancy did the angel appear to Mary?
 - a) Four
 - b) Five
 - c) Six
 - d) Seven
 10. In what city was Jesus brought up as a child?
 - a) Nazareth
 - b) Bethlehem
 - c) Jerusalem
 - d) Jericho

Answers to Monthly Bible Trivia Quiz

1. Bethlehem – Matthew 2:1 2. It doesn't say – Matthew 2:1 (It has been traditionally assumed there were three because they carried three gifts.) 3. They saw a star in the East – Matthew 2:2 4. Silver – Matthew 2:11 5. Shepherds – Luke 2:15 6. King David – Matthew 1:1; Luke 2:4 7. Angels – Luke 2:13-14 8. Isaiah – Matthew 1:23/Isaiah 7:14 9. Six – Luke 1:26 10. Nazareth – Matthew 2:23

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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AVENEL

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