

CONNEXION

A Monthly Newsletter
of
Peters Creek Church of the Brethren



REMEMBERING CHRISTMAS

Christmas is coming! How will you remember this Christmas? Will you worry about not being able to buy Christmas presents as you did in the past? Will you cull your Christmas card list and not send as many greetings because of the cost of cards and postage? Will you bake fewer cookies? Will you stay at home more and not travel as much this Christmas season? Or will you transform this year's Christmas into the real meaning of Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior?

Listening to and reading news reports, we might think that Christmas is in danger because of the financial crisis in the world. Some of the people interviewed by the media say that Christmas won't be the same this year because they don't have as much money to spend on gifts, travel, and food. So far, I haven't heard anyone say that Christmas is not just about the gifts, travel, food and money. Somehow, Christmas is just another American holiday to get a day off from work, to spend more than we truly need to spend, and to forget the reason for the holiday.

As Christians, we confess that the meaning of Christmas is to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Savior of our lives and of the world. The first tradition of Christmas was to attend a special worship on Christmas Eve and to attend another worship on Christmas Day. During these "masses" the prophecies about a Messiah were read as well as the birth narratives from the Gospels. The Eucharist (bread and cup) were shared in thankfulness for the birth of the Messiah or Christ.

All our other traditions of Christmas were later. This does not make them any less as memories of Christmas. Most of them were added to the celebration of Christmas to teach the meaning of Christmas to converts to Christianity, or to renew the meaning of Christmas among those who were gradually making the Christmas season a more worldly celebration. Advent (the four Sundays before Christmas) was a time of preparing hearts and minds for the joy and peace of Christmas. Carols told the story of Christmas to those who

could not read and did not have access to the Scriptures. The plants of Christmas – holly, ivy, the poinsettia, and the evergreen tree – all carry meanings related to the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So let me ask again a question I asked early in my writing today. **How will you remember this Christmas?** It really depends upon whether you are celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ or worried about the commercialization of Christmas. Remember, there would not be a Christmas if God has not sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to us as a baby in a manger at Bethlehem in the land of present day Israel.

If you have forgotten what the real meaning of Christmas is, -- if you want to remember Christmas as the birth of Jesus Christ – than I invite you to transform your Christmas by worshipping each of the four Sundays of Advent. Get involved with your family in the activities at Peters Creek which celebrate Christmas as Christ's birth. You can hear why we "hang greens" and decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias. You can hear the children share Christmas with the drama: "Is it really Christmas?" You can hear the Christmas Cantata: "Celebrate the Season." And you can highlight your Christmas Celebration with our Christmas Eve Communion and Candle lighting.

At Peters Creek, we know that the real meaning of Christmas is to remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Savior of the Earth.



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS WORSHIPS

We are in the Season of Advent. Advent is the time of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord. While we are busy preparing our homes, buying our gifts, sending our cards, and all the activities surrounding Advent and Christmas, we are called by our God to prepare our hearts to receive the Christ anew.

The choir is busy preparing for a beautiful cantata for December 21. The children are busy preparing a play for December 14. And after our Hanging of the Greens Worship on November 30, the church will be beautifully decorated for the season.

Come and worship! And invite your unchurched friends and neighbors to worship with you! Come and share "The Wonderful Memories of Christmas!"

December 7: Second Sunday of Advent Lighting the Candle of Hope/Expectancy

Scripture: the Prophecy of Isaiah 1:1-9

Message: "A Kingdom of Peace."

December 14: Third Sunday of Advent Lighting the Candle of Peace/Wholeness

Scripture: The Prophecy of Isaiah 40:1-11

Message: "Is it REALLY Christmas?"

December 21: Fourth Sunday of Advent Lighting the Candle of Joy/Celebration

Cantata: "Celebrate the Season"

December 24: Christmas Eve – 6:00 PM Lighting the Candle of Christ

We meet for our Christmas Eve Communion and Candle Lighting Worship.

December 28:

We will have a guest speaker. Pastor Lowe and family will be on vacation.

CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION AND CANDLELIGHTING



It has been a tradition to have a Christmas Eve Communion at Peters Creek for some years now. We added to this a new tradition of lighting individual candles near the end of the Christmas Eve worship. And several years ago, we started a new tradition of Family Candles.

This year, we invite every family of Peters Creek to bring a candle marked with their family's name. On Christmas Eve, these candles will be placed on the Communion Table and lighted to add the special warm glow of candlelight to our worship.

Even if your family can not attend Christmas Eve Worship, we would like to have a candle for your family. Bring them with you on a Sunday before Christmas Eve and on Christmas Eve we will add them to all the others lighted to show the way for the Christ Child to come to Peters Creek.

And after Christmas Eve worship, come to the Lowe home for some light refreshments, featuring the Lowe's famous meatballs and hot cider, as well other hors d'oeuvres and sweets.

PROVIDE CHRISTMAS DINNER THROUGH SECOND HARVEST



Many families in Southwest Virginia will have a Christmas Dinner thanks to Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Food Bank and our gifts of food to Second Harvest on the Second Sunday of December.

As you shop in the next few weeks, pick up a few extra cans of vegetables, boxes of stuffing mix, canned fruit, cranberry sauce and other foods for a Christmas meal. Or if it's easier; donate money so that Second Harvest can buy meats for Christmas meals.

Christmas is a season of giving. Our gifts to Second Harvest throughout the year provide food for local food pantries, for free meal programs, and for our sisters and brothers in need of healthy food.



The Women's Fellowship for 2008 has been involved in several projects and contributions for the following:

Super Bowl/Sharing, American Cancer Relay for Life, National MS Society, Parking Lot Fund, Children's Ministry, Love/Benevolent Gifts, Men's Fellowship Donations, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Soup for Seniors, Virlina District Women's Fellowship, RAM Annual Donation, Rescue Mission, LOA/Melrose Tower's Resident Christmas Party, Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center, District Emergency Clean-up Kits and Good Neighbor Fund/Roanoke Times.

Throughout this year, we have collected and donated to the following: 51 "like new-used adult coats to RAM, 50 dozen homemade cookies for the Roanoke Valley Mission Of Moms 2008 and 53 items to Hands for Christ (Bibles, materials).

Other projects through the year have been funeral luncheons and celebration showers held at the church, the purchase of 2 commercial stand mixers, and a professional cleaning service that cleaned our church kitchen.

At our 2008 bazaar held recently, we made up "Thank You" bags to give each woman that came to our bazaar as an outreach project. The bags contained a pen, brochure of our church, a Nov/Dec calendar of events for Peters Creek Church of the Brethren and a piece of candy.

We would like to say a very gracious "Thank You" to all who participated in any way for the bazaar. We feel that this year's bazaar was even more successful than last year, and we plan to make the 2009 bazaar even more SUCCESSFUL with your participation.



The Witness Commission and Nurture Commission will sponsor a **Family Fun Night** on **Sunday, January 18, 2009** from **5:00PM to 7:00PM**. We will have a speaker and presentation from the

Disaster Relief Ministries along with a pot-luck dinner. For more information, please contact Christa Hylton (389-1487) or Darrell Hungate (380-2748).

STEWARDS COMMISSION

Peters Creek COB has been blessed with the generosity of many people giving of their time, talent and gifts.

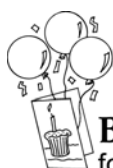
- A projection screen for the sanctuary was purchased in memory of Esteel Vinyard by her family from her memorial fund.
- Two console tables in the Narthex were purchased from the Kathleen Craun memorial fund with the approval of her children. They are in memory of Harold and Kathleen Craun.
- A new sofa, loveseat and chair for the Parlor room were donated by Rowe Furniture Company. Thank you to Randy Compton and Ruby Spradling for obtaining these items.
- Ceiling tiles for the Parlor room were donated by Trimmy Carter.
- Willing Workers Class has donated five hundred dollars to help with the repairs to the stained glass window.
- "Joyful Noise" Offerings helped purchase new choir robes, assisted a family who lost everything in a fire and contributed to the Virlina District Hispanic Church development.
- Collected \$1,062.00 for the Erwin COB to help with their lost in a fire.
- Contributed \$786.00 for Bridgewater Choir expenses.

Time and Talent:

- Trimmy Carter and Dean Mannon installed lights for apple butter.
- All the men who removed the bathroom and built a much needed kitchen supply closet.
- Sue Lawrence and Norma Cregar for cleaning the kitchen.
- Dean and Mary Mannon for cleaning that nasty warmer.
- Glenna and Darrell Hungate, and Dean Mannon cleaned all the glass and wood in the sanctuary.
- Trimmy Carter, Dickie Lester, Dean Mannon, Darrell Hungate and all the anonymous people constantly worked to keep our property in good condition. They saved us thousands of dollars.

Wow! 2008 was a terrible year for our country's economically. The congregation of Peters Creek COB kept the faith, trusted the Lord, and the church prospered. Praise God and thank Him for this family. It will be exciting to experience the growth of our church in 2009. **Sylvia Flora Chair 2008**

- 2 – Sue Lawrence
- 5 – Kelly Otey
- 7 – Mitch Spencer
- 8 – Ken Mitchell
- 11 – Nickolas Halverson
- 12 – Cory Lowe
- 14 – Bobby Wilson
- 16 – Linda Davis, Katherine Mau, Ray Martin
- 17 – Jerry Rhodes, Roxanne Spencer
- 25 – Anna Hall
- 26 – Michael Atkins
- 28 – Charles Wilkerson, Linda Pulz
- 29 – Logan Atkins, Jordan Keith



BIRTHDAYS
for January

January Anniversaries

- 2 – Harold and Lydia Harrison
- 23 – George and Clara Walters



Happy Anniversary!

Please notify the church office if you wish to be included in or make corrections to the birthday and anniversary list.

Sarah Ammermann, Sharon Ammon, Pam Brashear, Judson Bowles, Bill Casteel, Drucilla Collins, Rosemary Hall, Bob Hardy, Lydia Harrison, Margie Hash, Debbie Hartsock, Otha Huff, Nannie King, Ruth Lawhorn, Burt Morrison, Connie Nichols, Kelly Otey, Olive Pauley, Jeanette Patterson, Lester Reed, Jimmy Spencer, Barbara Spradling, Iva Whitson, Wesley York



Please notify the church office if you would like to add or remove a name from the prayer list.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Counters:

Georgia Coffman, Margaret Saul

Deacons:

Mabel Naff and Richard Wright

Fellowship Time:

Sound System:

Greeters:

1/04

1/11

1/18

1/25

Ushers:

1/04 Wes Boone, Joel Keith, George Walters, Richard Wright

1/11 Trimmy Carter, Ray Clark, James Cox, Joe Kropff

1/18 Jeff Graffeo, Don King, Mike Mau, John Montgomery

1/25 Ray Clark, George Walters, Clarence Wise, Richard Wright

Sunday School Nursery:

1/04

1/11

1/18

1/25

Worship Nursery:

1/04

1/11

1/18

1/25

Scripture Readers:

1/04

1/11

1/18

1/25

Children's Story:

1/04

Children's Church:

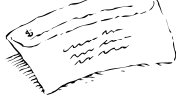
1/04 Christa Hylton, Glenna Hungate

1/11 Christa Hylton, Glenna Hungate

1/18 Linda Pulz, Vickie Wise

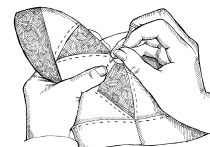
1/25 Linda Pulz, Vickie Wise

Offering Envelopes



You may pick up your **2009 offering envelopes** on the table in the Narthex. Please note that your envelope number will not be the same as last year. **Discard offering envelopes from 2008 or previous years. It is very important that you write your name on the outside of the envelope before placing in the offering plate.** If you use an old envelope and do not write your name on the outside, then you will not receive recognition on your contribution statement. Thanks Melanie

THE BUSY BEES



QUILTING GROUP