

The Good News Gazette

December 2007

Pastor's Notes:

Please Read: Luke 1:5-2:40

“But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.”

Luke 2:19-20 (NRSV)

“You increase your joy by increasing the pure joy of others.”

Torkcom Saraydarian (1917-1997)
Scholar and sacred music composer

The season Advent and Christmas is upon us. During this time of year, most of us have several lists going at once so that we can celebrate Christ's birth in the ways that is most meaningful to us and our families. Of course, there is the traditional “to do list”. This list includes such things as clean the house in preparation for Christmas Decorations to be put up. We have a card list that might even include a Christmas letter to bring others up to date what is going on with you and your family. We have a shopping list of special ingredients to make the annual treats of cookies, fudge, pies and meals. We all have a list of gifts to make or buy for family and friends. (We all will remember the cards that we made in school as well as bring Christmas cookies to the “Christmas Celebration at school or even at work.) This brings us to the next list which usually can fall into the category of “How am I going to do all of this?” list. It is the whole hosts of opportunities to attend events such as: Christmas concerts, Tree Lighting, Holly Trails, as well as special gatherings with family and friends even before Christmas Eve or Christmas Day!

Most of us look at our calendars and just sigh as we begin to “pencil in ” all these lists before December 25th! Maybe this year we can begin to renew or even start a new tradition! Take some time for peace and joy! When we attend worship throughout Advent, we give our souls, (as well as our minds and emotions), an opportunity to pause, ponder and reflect in such away that we can be restored and renewed to rejoice in the birth of our Lord and Savior!

On Christmas Eve we gather together for our Lord as we worship our Savior at our 8 p.m. service. We will be able to come forward to receive the Lord's communion remembering that God had a prepared a special time for His Prophetic Word to be fulfilled. May we be like Simeon who held the infant Jesus and our Lord in his arms and proclaimed :

“...for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to Your people Israel.” Luke 2:30-32

May we open the doorway to our hearts, souls and minds in new and wondrous ways this Advent Season and Christmas. May we all find that our time is ultimately a gift from our Lord to touch our lives and inspire our souls! May we all open the gift of the Lord's peace and joy and make place our Lord at the top of our priority list because **HE IS THE WHOLE REASON FOR THIS SEASON!**

Peace, Hope & Faith in Christ's Service,

Pastor Karen Green

***Visitors are always welcome at The First Presbyterian Church in Chester, New York. Please join us for Sunday Services as 10:00 a.m.

Advent Devotionals will be available for you to pick up starting Sunday, November 25th. This year's devotionals are entitled: "Open Before Christmas" by Arden W. Mead. Your Worship Team and Church Family Team pray that you will be specially blessed reading this year's devotions.

Will You Please Help!

Maggie Johnson requests:
One or more ladies and one or more men who would be willing to participate in a special worship service on December 30th. It is titled, "Reflections of Light: Ponderings of Mary, the Mother of Jesus the Christ." Scripture, 5 short readings and many carols contribute to a very meaningful hour of worship. It sums up the entire Advent Season in a unique way and enables us to understand more clearly just why Jesus came to live among us on our earth. Please let Maggie know as soon as possible if you are able to share your time and voice for this service. Thank you very much.

Poinsettias for the Sanctuary for Advent and Christmas

Our poinsettias will be available this year for \$8.00. They are available in red, white, pink or marble. A sign-up sheet will be available in the library or you may call the church office, 469-4877 and leave a message to place your order. We also have the same designation as last year. They are: as a thank offering, in loving memory of, in honor of, or to the glory of God. All orders must be placed by Sunday, December 2nd to have your requests printed in the bulletin. Please make your checks payable to the Margaret Emody Flower Fund.

**Advent Worship Services
&
Christmas Eve Service!**

This Advent and Christmas Eve plan to come home to our Lord and bring your family and friends to worship. This year's Advent Season we will be lighting our Advent Wreath using a litany entitled: "The Light of the World!"

Our Christmas Eve Service will be at 8:00 p.m.
Communion will be served by intinction. This service is entitled: "**Arise! Shine Jesus, our Savior, is the Light of the World**"
Plan to attend our worship services and bring a friend to worship with you before our Lord!

Our Church Directory and mail slot list for the mail boxes at church have been updated! Plan to pick up your copies after worship during Advent.

Pastor Karen will be away on vacation December 25-January 2nd. She will return to the church office on January 3rd. If you are in need of pastoral care during this time, please call Rev. Bob Hoag at 692-4017.

WOMEN'S COUNCIL NEWS

We had a very busy meeting in November. Betty Lutjens led us in devotions by reading scripture and some articles on giving and thankfulness. We received a letter from our dear friend, Mina Milby, with a list of special hymns for special people and occasions. Here are a few for you to enjoy; (A) The Tailor's Hymn, (B) The Golfer's Hymn, (C) The Politician's Hymn, (D) The Contractor's Hymn. Answers are below if you can't guess.

The program this month was picking out names of people that we are thankful for in the church and the community that have done special things in forwarding our service to the Lord. A Bible is sent to others in their honor.

We did very well at the Bake Table for the roast beef dinner. Thanks so much to all of you who contributed. We decided to give the church a Christmas gift this year by paying the heat bill for December as we are so grateful to have a warm sanctuary to worship in. Delicious seasonal refreshments were provided by Rosemary Eckard - an apple cake, sliced apples and crackers with her famous cheese ball that looks like an apple.

December's meeting will be on Tuesday, December 11th at 1 o'clock in the church library. Carol Ravert has the devotions, Maggie Johnson the

refreshments, and Pastor Karen the program. This is usually a wonderful way to celebrate the Christmas season and we'd like to invite all the women - members and friends of the church to join us. We enjoy each other's fellowship and would like to see you there.

Answers: (A) "Holy, Holy, Holy" (B) "There is a Green Hill Far Away" (C) "Standing on the Promises" (D) "The Church's One Foundation"

If you enjoyed this maybe we could enlarge on it and write a Chester Presbyterian Church Version. Keep thinking!

Youth Group News:

With your prayerful support and donations, our youth group was able to pack and deliver 35 Operation Christmas Child Boxes. We took these boxes to the regional drop off center in the Goodwill Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Montgomery, NY where tractor trailers were being filled with Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child boxes. Thank you again for helping to bring the joy of the Lord and the Lord's redeeming message to children in this country and around the world!

On Saturday, November 17th, our youth group raked leaves for Cystic Fibrosis. This project was rescheduled because of the leaves remaining on the trees so long this fall. It was a cold and windy day as we raked four lawns and raised \$165.00 for Cystic Fibrosis. We certainly had a great time with the help of Jim Seymour who helped keep our leaf blowers running!

On Wednesday, December 5th from 5-8 p.m., our youth group will be ringing the bell for Salvation Army donations in front of Shop-Rite! Stop by and encourage our youth as they receive donations for this very worthy cause!

Second Offerings in December

People for People Second Offering:

On Sunday, **December 2nd** we will receive our **People for People offering**. This offering will help local people who might even be your friends or neighbors who are in need. Please make checks payable to: The First Presbyterian Church and be sure to make a note in your memo that your offering is for People for People. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

Christmas Joy Second Offering:

On **Sunday, December 16th** we will receive our **Christmas Joy Offering**. This offering is for “support for health and welfare concerns for children around our world as well as to assist current and retired church workers by providing funds to help them through difficult times and provide scholarships for racial ethnic schools and colleges to deserving students. Please make your checks payable to: The First Presbyterian church. You may use an envelope provided for you in your church bulletin. Be sure to indicate that your contribution is for the Christmas Joy Offering.

WORSHIP SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS IN CASE OF INCLAMENT WEATHER

If our area is experiencing inclement weather or other emergencies, we may need to postpone or cancel services. Please tune your radio to one of the following stations:

WHUD 100.7 FM or www.whud.com
WGNY Hits 103.1 FM or <http://www.wgny.us>
WGNY Oldies 1220 AM

We do sincerely hope that we will not need to use this service. However, we appreciate your cooperation in case the need arises.

Christmas Peace

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty god, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:6

Lord, Bless the Cards We've Written By Myrtle Beeler Day

Lord, bless the cards we've written,
May they bear a joyous greeting.
Bless the gifts we've wrapped and tied;
May they radiate Thy Love.
Bless the wreaths that we have hung
In doorway, stair, and hall;
May they speak of life eternal,
Thy dominion over all.

Bless the lovely candle
Shining forth into the night
May it carry far and wide
The wondrous message of Thy Light.
Bless the sweet traditions of
Thy dear holy birth;
May they lead us in the worship of
The Savior the Lord of Earth
(from Prayers and Poems for Christmas, Ideals 1995)

O God of Peace

O God of peace who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength; by the might of Thy Spirit lift us, we pray Thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that Thou art god; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(The Book of Common Worship)

2007 Team Chairs and Co- Chairs

Ministering to the People

Church Family: Sara Green (469-2975)

Jerry Sutherland (469-4166)

Meets monthly on the First Tuesday at 7:30

Other Teams of ministry within the Church Family Team:

The Worship Team (meets as needed)

Worship Correspondence Team (meets as needed)

Extended Family: John Miller (782-5978)

Janet Writer (469-2578)

Meets as needed & beginning to find regular meeting time

Other Teams of ministry within the Extended Family Team:

New Membership (meets monthly on the First Thursday at 7:30 p.m.)

Shrove Tuesday Team (meets as needed)

Blood Drive Team (meets as needed)

Caring for God's House

Buildings Grounds: Okey Barrett (651-4707)

Jerry Sutherland (469-4166)

Meets as needed

Administration & Finance: John Ravert (469-1801)

Administration Team: (meets as needed)

Finance Team: (meets monthly on the first Thursday at 7:00 p.m.)

Other Teams of ministry within the Finance Team such as:

Half Chicken Sale Team (meets as needed)

New Membership: (Meets monthly on the first Thursday at 7:30 p.m.)

We are always looking for our brothers and sisters in Christ to help us serve the Lord. Want to join a team in our church? Please contact the team chair/co-chair. We look forward to working with you in the Lord's ministry!

Organist/Music Director: Maggie Johnson (469-4268)

Sunday School Superintendent: Barbara Babcock
(469-4117)

Treasurer: John Ravert (469-1801)

Assistant Treasurer: Marsha Seymour

Sexton: Betty Lutjens (468-2524)

Pastor: Karen N. Green (469-4877)

Clerk of Session: John Ravert (469-1801)

Moderator of Deacons: James Peterson
(845-629-5848)

Church Office: (469-4877)

Secretary: