

The Good News Gazette

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

94--96 Main Street
Chester, New York 10918
845-469-4877

December 2009

Alternative Giving

About ten years ago, something changed in the pattern of our family giving at Christmastime. Our custom was that we gathered at my Brother's house in River Edge, New Jersey on Christmas Eve. That included a fairly large group: parents, children, brothers, sisters, cousins, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, etc. You get the picture. One nice feature was that my late uncle, Fred Hillringhouse, would do a reading for the children of *"The Visit of St. Nicholas."* He would do it with a lot of drama, and the children loved it!

Anyway, our pattern at that time was that everyone, at least all the adults, would try to bring a present for everyone else! They couldn't fit under the tree, but mounted up in a huge pile. We used to take pleasure in how high the pile was getting. Finally, my cousin's wife, Linda Hillringhouse, said she couldn't enjoy the orgy of gift giving any more. After the presents were opened, the wrapping paper and ribbons would just about fill the whole room. Linda made a suggestion: instead of everyone bringing a present for everyone else, let's pick names out of a hat, so everyone will bring just one present. Then each person or family should donate at least \$25 to a soup kitchen in Paterson. The idea caught on right away, and we've been doing it ever since.

"Alternative Giving" is catching on all over the Country. Our Presbytery has a catalogue of possibilities which I would be happy to show to anyone who requests it.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Pastor Jerry Wondra

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Submitted by our Music/Worship Team

"How far is it to Bethlehem? Not very far."* Join us in the procession of Shepherds and Kings as we journey there to greet our newborn King – Jesus Christ, Savior, Emmanuel, God with us, this Advent season. Rejoice with us on Christmas Eve as we receive the greatest gift ever given to one and all – the Redeemer of all the world's peoples. "In Him was (is!) life, and the life was (is!) the light of men." (John 1:4)

Our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be offered to God in thanksgiving and praise December 24, 8 PM. Please join us as we worship the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." (Rev. 19:16) Alleluia!

*Frances Chesterton

Have a Christ-filled Christmas!

IMMANUEL

The young woman ... shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14

Listen to some of Jesus' names: Vine, Living Water, Savior, Prince of Peace, Bread of Life, Good Shepherd. Don't they make good pictures in your mind?

Here's another: Immanuel. It means "God is with us," and it tells us that Jesus knows exactly what it's like to be us. He was born as a baby and grew up in a family. He knew what it was like to be hurt by others, even His friends.

And he was tempted to disobey God. Yes, He knows us! And He still chooses to love and forgive us. What an Immanuel!

Can you find these names in the puzzle?

Immanuel	V	W	A	T	E	R	K	R	T	S
Jesus										
Vine	S	A	V	I	O	R	I	U	J	M
Water										
	Z	S	I	M	M	A	N	U	E	L
Savior										
Shepherd	K	D	N	S	N	T	G	T	S	I
Christ										
King	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	U	O
	S	L	V	I	C	H	R	I	S	T

Sunday School Announcement

The First Presbyterian Church of Chester is proud to announce an exciting new beginning of our Sunday School program. This year's program is being held **prior** to our weekly Sunday Worship and is always open to all youth (3 years and older) interested in learning about the Word of God in a fun and inspirational setting. The curriculum for this year is "Get the Edge" and includes fun activities, workbook lessons as well as upbeat and energetic music to help our youth realize they are an important part of a spiritual team. Help the children of our community "Get the Edge" on dealing with popularity, integrity, success and failure, friendships and relationships in general – all in a constructive and Biblical sense.

All children are invited to join us on Sunday mornings from 9am-9:45am for Sunday School. Our Sunday Worship service follows from 10-11am. Although participation in our Worship service is not required for Sunday School children we encourage all to attend and become part of our extended church family.

For more information regarding the First Presbyterian Church of Chester please call the church office at 845-469-4877 or visit our web site at <http://www.chespresny.com>.

WOMEN'S COUNCIL NEWS



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
BLANKETS+

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.
Jeremiah 29:11





Dear Friends,

*Thank you for your recent gift to the **Blankets+ Program**. We are grateful for your caring response to the needs of people around the world through your support of this program. Your continued support will enable CWS to fund initiatives that provide for emergency relief, long-term recovery and productive opportunities that promote self-sufficiency and empowerment, bringing hope and the promise of a better life.*

Please call our office at any time if you would like to have a CWS representative visit your congregation to share more on the work you make possible worldwide. In the meantime, please visit our web site – www.churchworldservice.org for more information on projects that CWS is currently involved with.

Again, thank you for partnering with us in these efforts!

CWS-NJ/NY Metro Area Regional Staff



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
P.O. Box 214 Rocky Hill, NJ 08553
888-297-2767. nj@churchworldservice.org

Our Women's Council has supported this mission for many years and thanks to our generous congregation, it has been very successful. It is sponsored by Church World Service and this year they have added tools as well as blankets to help make needy people more self-sufficient. Last year we were the second highest givers in the Mid Hudson area. Though our congregation is small, we are very generous to those in need. Our total this year was \$1068.00. Thank you all.

Our December meeting was so meaningful and really depicted the true meaning of Christmas to those who attended through the devotions and the film. Delicious refreshments were served.

Our next meeting will be on Tues., Jan.12 at 1:00 in the church library.

A Gift Idea

ShopRite Gift Cards are available after church (or by special arrangement) from Carol Ravert in denominations of \$10, \$25, \$50 and \$100. We appreciate your purchasing these as the church benefits from every sale. What a wonderful way to give a gift and help our church at the same time!

Co-workers

We are co-workers
In the building
Of the church
Whether it be
Of wood and stone
Or faith and love

K. S. Hardy—Bowling Green, Ohio

The old man looked ever-so nice in his freshly pressed suit., “spankin’ clean white shirt, and the Christmas tie he had saved for a special occasion. He was sitting right beside the door when we arrived for our Sunday visit with Don’s mother. We greeted the man as we entered the nursing home, and he beamed at us. It was his birthday, he explained, and his son was coming to share it with him. It had been a long time since he had seen his son, who had a very important job back east and could seldom leave his place of business. This year he had promised to come. He should be here any minute now. We left him joyfully awaiting the arrival of his beloved son.

The afternoon stretched on as we visited. Down the hall we could hear the old man’s repeating his good news to all who came. Everyone was happy for him; his joy was contagious. But dusk began to descend, and still there was no sign of the busy son who had such an important job. The old man was no longer joyfully sharing his good news, and a sadness had fallen upon all of us as we witnessed the old man’s disappointment. Finally we could hear the nurse gently saying, “John, let me take you back to your room now. You have been sitting here all day.” Barely able to hold back his tears, the old man let himself be taken back to his room.

The next time we went back to visit Don’s mother, the old man was no longer there. The nurse said he had died a few days after his birthday.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, forgive us for being thoughtless, uncaring, and hurting towards others because of our selfish ways. Help us to reach out to others before it is too late. Teach us to be kind in word and deed, and help us to comfort those in need; in the blessed name of Jesus. Amen

Lorene Clark—Bremen, Indiana

Why visiting Elant is so important to us.

HISTORY OF THE THANK OFFERING (INCLUDING HEALTH MINISTRIES)

The Thank Offering was conceived in 1887 when Mrs. Eliza Clokey of Springfield, Ohio urged each woman to give \$1 over and above her usual contribution to the Woman's General Missionary Society of the United Presbyterian Church of North America as a "thank offering to her Lord." In 1888, a day was set aside for meetings which were to be a "concert of prayer and praise and the gathering of the Thank Offering." The gifts gathered throughout the previous year were presented at the annual convention and represented much soul-searching and self sacrificing on the part of many women. The impact they made was immeasurable. It has been said that women's giving saved the worldwide missionary movement at that time.

The thrust of how and where the money was used changed over the years, but a "Thank Offering to her Lord" continued to be an important part of women's giving by United Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted the Thank Offering (including Health Ministries) as one of two special offerings of Presbyterian Women.

The Thank Offering (including Health Ministries) is celebrating 111 years of giving by thousands of women whose thanksgiving to God is made visible by their gifts.

33% Health (Medical) Missions

67% New Creative Ministries

News from the Deacons

As this year draws to a close and we prepare ourselves to begin a new year, a new journey perhaps, the Deacons would like to recognize and thank this year's slate of members for all of their hard and dedicated work.

The Deacons role in the church is centered around member outreach and support but also includes service to the community. In addition to the responsibilities of Coffee Hour / Fellowship time after our Worship Service each week and the preparation and serving of Communion we also organize, plan and run the Chester Community Food Pantry. We are now feeding approximately 84 families – just from Chester – each and every month. Although this number has been growing with the state of our economy we anticipate it to grow even more as we head into the winter months and heating bills consume even more of the limited resources available to some families in our community.

None of this could be done without the tireless efforts of this past year's Board of Deacons. Please join me in extending a much needed and heartfelt Thank You to each of the following members:

Matt Van Der Meulen – Moderator of Deacons

James Peterson – Asst Moderator and coordinator for our food pickups at the Hudson Valley Regional Food Bank

Jean Barrett – Secretary and Food Pantry Coordinator

Linda Poshadel – Treasurer

Samantha Green – Correspondence committee

Ruth Magyar – Creative Thoughtfulness committee

All of these people have put in countless hours and creative service to make sure that our work gets done, that we recognize and thank those in the community that help us with donations of money and time, and that our finances are kept in order while being good stewards of our money as we work to support the role we have been selected for as Deacons. Each one has shown their God given talents and work with the mission of our church and our Lord in their efforts and duties.

Thank you to all of them !!

2009 Team Chairs and Co-Chairs

Ministering to the People

Music and Worship Team: Maggie Johnson (469-4268)
Marsha Seymour (469-4311)

Christian Education and Youth Team: Janet Writer (469-2578)

Mission and Outreach Team: Sara Green (469-2975)

Stewardship and Finance: John Ravert (469-1801)

Buildings and Grounds Team: Jerry Sutherland

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.

Interim Minister: Gerald Wondra: Church (469-4877)
Manse (469-4281)

Clerk of Session: Scott Vogt (469-3068)
Moderator of Deacons: Matt Van Der Meulen (469-6427)
V. Moderator of Deacons: James Peterson (610-3670, cell 325-1829)
Treasurer: John Ravert (469-1801)
Secretary: Ruth Magyar (469-4078)

Church Office: 469-4877
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Website: www.chespresny.com

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