

The Messenger

December 2008

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

GUEST MISSIONARY SPEAKERS

On Sunday, December 7, we will welcome Rev. John and Kathy Dech to our worship service. They have recently returned from their missionary trip to India and will share stories and insights of their journey. Please mark this special day on your calendar so you won't miss this unique opportunity to speak with our missionaries. After our worship service, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a light lunch and refreshments as we spend more time with them.

COMMUNION

We will celebrate the **Sacrament of Holy Communion** on Sunday, December 7, during our regular Sunday Worship Service which begins at 10:30 am.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12

"THE GIFT"

Join us as we travel to the Back Mountain Harvest Assembly to see *The Gift*, a musical drama of the Nativity. Please see inside this issue for more details.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our Sunday School Christmas Party will be held on Saturday, December 20, from 10 am to noon. This will also be the last day to drop off "care packages" for the McKinney Clinic. Please see inside this issue for more details.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

During our Worship Service on December 21, the children and choirs will present our Christmas Program, *The Colors of Christmas*. Please see inside this issue for more details.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

As some of you may be aware, the Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on **Sunday, December 21**, after our worship service. Please see inside this issue for more details.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

After our Worship Service, we will travel to see our homebound members and to the local nursing homes to entertain them with songs of the season. So get your vocal choirs tuned up to bring some holiday cheer to others.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

On Christmas Eve, we will begin our celebration of Christ's birth with special music which will begin at 7 pm. Our Early Candlelight service will begin at 7:30 pm and the Late Candlelight service is at 11:00 pm. We hope that everyone will come to worship our new-born King. Come, let us adore Him.

WEDNESDAY EVENING SERVICES

Our Wednesday evening services begin at 6:30 pm. Everyone is welcome to join us for this midweek Communion service.

Emmanuel United Church of Christ

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From The Pastor's Desk

Once again we have arrived at the beginning of the calendar for our church year. This is the season when we prepare our hearts and minds to greet the Christ child. Amidst the hustle and bustle of the season we must take time out to be aware of the wonder surrounding us as the people of God. What a wonder-filled time of year – the beauty of new fallen snow surrounds us much of the time. And even though it tends to add to our work by having to clear a path let it remind us that we also need to clear a path in our hearts to accept the gift of Jesus – the most wonderful gift that we could ever have received.

The Advent candle will be lit each Sunday until the Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve. Take the time to reflect on the goodness of God and the hope, peace, joy, and love that this season brings – not only to this time of the year but to our lives throughout the year.

As we sing our carols, shop, wrap the special gifts we have for our loved ones, bake all those goodies, attend church, and even go about our normal daily routine let us pause, give thanks, shout out a praise to our gracious God who loves us sooooo much.

For those of you who have lost loved ones during the past year this will be an especially difficult time of year. Know that you are in our prayers and that you don't have to face this time alone. Your church family is here for you – I am here for you. Please call if you feel the need. Our hearts and our arms are open to you.

God bless you all!

Pastor Penny

Thank You

A special thank you for all who helped serve the meal for Catherine Rinehimer and for all other acts of sympathy. The Family of Catherine Rinehimer

Esther Heller and family would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, flowers and support as we deal with the loss of our loved one, Ernie Heller. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated by all of us.

Thank you to Pack 433 for providing the church with the recycle bins for cans and bottles.

The Sunday School would like to thank Pack 433 for letting us use their decorations for our Fall Fest. They were awesome.

Thanks to Jim Rinehimer for placing recycle boxes in our church for used bulletins.

We received a thank you letter from Susan M. Sanders, One Great Hour of Sharing Administrator. She thanks us for our special offering for the Midwest Flood Recovery and outlines several ways that our OGHS offerings have helped people around the world and in the United States as they struggle to recover from disasters. The letter is on the bulletin board in the bell tower.

Our Condolences

Our sincere sympathy is offered to John, Camille, Jim and Mike Daniels on the passing of Camille's father, Joseph J. Bobeck, M.D., on November 2, 2008. May our prayers comfort them in their loss.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

It was brought to the attention of Denise Dean and Rev. Penny at a Budget Seminar held by the PNEC, that the budget must be approved **prior** to the treasurer writing any checks. With this in mind, the Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday, December 21, after our Worship Service. The proposed 2009 Budget was approved by the Consistory for distribution in the weekly bulletins and extra copies are available on the table in the Narthex.

NOTICE TO ALL COMMITTEES, TEAMS AND ASSOCIATIONS: In accordance with our Constitution Article 10, All committees should have a report prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation.

“Article 10. ORGANIZATIONS, SOCIETIES. All organizations and societies of the Congregation are subordinate to the Consistory and shall make an annual report (Activities and Financial) to the Congregation.”

“THE GIFT”

There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for everyone interested in joining the bus trip to see The Gift at the Back Mountain Harvest Assembly on Friday, December 12. We will leave Emmanuel at 4:00 pm, stop for a bite to eat and arrive in time for the 6:00 pm showing. We will return to Emmanuel at approximately 8:00 pm. Any youth or Confirmation Class members attending without their parents will need to have a permission slip completed.

If you cannot make the Friday evening trip, the drama is being presented at other times:

Friday at 8 pm, Saturday at 6 and 8 pm, Sunday at 6 pm. This is the 15th performance and is really impressive with live animals (including a camel!) and over 100 actors. The show is approximately an hour long and is performed outside, so, remember your long johns. This fantastic pageant is free and a great way to remember the real reason for the season.

CONGREGATIONAL CORNER

TWILIGHTERS – Weather permitting, the Twilights will meet on Wednesday, December 10, at 12 pm for a covered dish dinner. We welcome you to join our group of “60-somethings” for good food and fellowship. If you wish to come, all you need is a good appetite for food and friendship. So bring a dish to share and join us. If you want to know more about our group, please call Ethel Fine at 868-3705.

POINSETTIA SIGN-UP SHEETS – There are sign-up sheets on the tables in the Narthex and next to the fellowship hall doorway for you to purchase poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary. The last day to sign up is December 14.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Please be generous in giving to our church ministries supported by this offering:

\$150 to Phoebe Devitt Home

\$150 to Bethany Children's Home

\$250 to Lancaster Theological Seminary

These organizations sincerely need and appreciate your support. The amounts you give through the Christmas offering are in addition to those provided by the annual budget allowance. Every penny counts with today's expenses, so please give generously.

2009 ENVELOPE BOXES

You may pick up your 2009 Envelope Boxes from the table in the Narthex.

Sunday School News

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Christmas Party will be on December 20 from 10 am to 12 pm. We are asking all the kids to bring a piece of fruit for the baskets for our shut-ins and a new or “gently used” stuffed animal or toy to be wrapped for the children of the McKinney Clinic.

We will also be gathering **care packages** to keep with our ongoing theme “**Giving without Thinking of Receiving**” for distribution to the people served by the McKinney Clinic. Bernie, the director of the clinic, has asked that we provide more men's packages. She says that they minister to more men than women and so there is a greater need for men's gifts. The packages should include: *new white socks, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, comb, razor, hand lotion and a candy cane.* If you would like to add anything else, please feel free (only nothing with alcohol in it). Also appreciated are gift cards from Walmart and K-Mart. A freezer bag holds the items very well. Attach a card signed by your family and send it with your child(ren) to the Christmas party or drop it off in the narthex under the Christmas tree **before Saturday, December 20**. That is when we will deliver everything to the clinic. Thank you for all your generosity.

When making your care package, please talk with your child(ren) about how wonderful it feels to know you will make someone's Christmas brighter by giving!

At this time, we **are not accepting any clothes** for the clinic. They are busy with holiday preparations and cannot sort through any new deliveries.

Thank you for all your support, Lisa Rinehimer

YOUTH GROUP

Any Youth Group members who want to see “**The Gift**” at the Back Mountain Harvest Assembly on Saturday, December 15 will need **to be at Emmanuel before we leave at 4:00 pm**. We will stop somewhere along the way for a bite to eat (like at McDonalds). We will return at approximately 8:00 pm. Any Youth Group members attending without their parents will need to have a permission slip completed.

We are planning for Soup-er-Bowl Sunday in February and the 30-Hour Famine which will be in either February or March. So keep your calendar open for these mission events. You all did a terrific job last year during the famine and I was proud to take you shopping at Mr. Z's to purchase food for the food bank with the money you raised during Soup-er-Bowl Sunday.

Marc Davis

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Our Christmas Pageant this year is “The Colors of Christmas” and will be held during worship on December 21. It will highlight the different colors of the season and how they relate to the Christmas story. The story will be narrated by some of our youth with other youth and children portraying the scenes they describe. There will be Mary and Joseph with baby Jesus, of course, along with shepherds, angels, wise men and villagers, all revealing to us again the wonderful story of Christ’s birth. The Senior Choir and Sonrise Singers will provide musical accompaniment and you will be invited to join in as we sing familiar Christmas carols and hymns.

PAGEANT PRACTICE

The following are dates that have been set. If we need anything additional, we will notify the parents as soon as possible:

- Dec. 14 after Worship Service
- Dec. 20 after the Sunday School Party (12 pm)
- Dec. 21 during Sunday School (9:00 am)

HALL RENTAL AGREEMENT REVISED

Due to increased costs, we are revising our Fellowship Hall Rental agreement. There will be a \$100 deposit to reserve the hall, half of which (\$50) may be refunded if the hall is left in good order and clean. The deposit will be the same whether a member or non-member rents the hall. This change will be effective January 1, 2009.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS CONSISTORY

The Consistory will meet on Thursday, December 18, at 6:30 pm.

NEWSLETTER INFO DEADLINE

December 17

The deadline for information for the December Messenger is Wednesday, December 17. Please get all information to me before this date. Thanks, Denise

DIRECTORY UPDATE

In order to keep our Directory current, I need updates on all addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Please note any changes on the sheet on the table in the Narthex or next to the Fellowship Hall door. I would

like to put out a new Directory for January. Thanks, Denise

AROUND OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

CRAFT SALE & CHINESE AUCTION

Slocum Methodist Church will have a Craft Sale and Chinese Auction on Saturday, December 13, from 10 am to 3 pm. Their church will be decorated in traditional holiday décor. Holiday crafts, Chinese auction, Victorian charm and food – what more could you ask for?

CHRISTKINDLFEST

We received information from Christ Lutheran Church in Hazleton (intersection of Church Street and Green Street) that they are holding a Christkindlefest on December 6 and 7 from 12 pm to 5 pm. Admission is free to this Christmas event. One of the main features is a “Sound and Light Fontanini Nativity Display – an 8’ by 20’ scale Nativity village diorama, which along with music and lighting will make the story of Jesus’ birth come alive. For an outline of all the events, please see the brochure on the bulletin board in the bell tower.

NOTE TO PRINTED DECEMBER CALEDAR

On the calendar which was printed and mailed out, there was a note that Pastor Penny would be on vacation. That has been changed, and Pastor Penny is not taking vacation the last week of December.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 2008

Dec. 7 – Second Sunday in Advent

- Greeters: Kyle Prelewicz and Alecia Myers
- Acolytes: Rachele Heller and Devin Stein

Dec. 14 – Third Sunday of Advent

- Greeters: Judy Cybulski and Connie Myers
- Acolyte: Meagan Grosz

Dec. 21 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

- Greeters: Dylan and Forrest Atkinson
- Acolyte: Kyle Prelewicz

Dec. 28 – First Sunday after Christmas

- Greeters: Richie Lenahan and Sami Dauber
- Acolyte: Autumn Atkinson

OUR CLEANING VOLUNTEERS

- Dave & Rosemary Myers
- Clifford & Gladys Readler
- Marc & Connie Davis
- John, Linda, & J.P. Jankowski

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Kayla Supkowski	10 Billy Martin	24 Donald Murray
1 Ronald Kania	10 Laura Cease	24 Lonnie Rinehimer, Sr.
1 Harry Henry, Jr.	12 Bruce Fine	25 Anthony DiMaria
2 Esther Heller	15 Andrew Horensky	26 Russell Koons
2 Bonnie Shafer	15 Kelsey Rinehimer	26 Linda Byrnes
3 David A. Myers	17 Danielle Pallando	26 Meredith Martin
8 Jason Seward	18 Brandon Ring	27 Marian Rinehimer
10 Michael Belanchik	20 Darlene Stein	28 Lonnie Rinehimer, Jr.
10 Lorrie Slusser	21 Mary Rinehimer	

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Dec. 13, 1968..... Lonnie and Mary Rinehimer

Dec. 15, 1984..... Peter and Gwen Sakowski

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