

From Pastor Steve's Desk...

Welcome to *GraceNotes!* This month, *GraceNotes* is filled to the brim with great information and inspiration from Panama United Methodist. And in celebration of the incredible event that God spun into motion when Jesus was born, we say,

“Come, Lord Jesus, Come...”

It was not suddenly and unannounced that Jesus came into the world. He came into a world that had been prepared for him. The whole Old Testament is the story of a special preparation ... Only when all was ready, only in the fullness of his time, did Jesus come. (Phillips Brooks, The Consolations of God: Great Sermons of Phillips Brooks)

When we consider the time between the day after Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, our minds flood with anxiety, joy, anticipation, and a general sense of having been here before. Yet are we preparing? Or better yet, are we being prepared? You see, in December of each year, we can spend our time making all the preparations for Christmas in a stunning array of presents, parties, and decorating. These things even take place importantly at church and with our brothers and sisters in the body of believers. However, is there a way to look at this from a new perspective?

We know that Christmas is coming. We know that each year, our calendars are very clear to announce that December 25 is Christmas. If we spend our time preparing, will we as a church and as individuals be ready? Sure our houses, our church building, and our offices will be beautiful, but will our hearts be ready? What might it look like for us to be prepared for the coming of Jesus?

The Old Testament story of the preparation of the world for Jesus is not about the right sacrifices, the right Temple, or the correct alignment of the stars. At the heart of the Old Testament is...well, the heart! Every time God gets angry at the people for not following His commands, it's an issue of the people's hearts not being willing to have faith that what God says is true. The special preparation that God planned for His people was meant to give them all the chances needed to be ready for God to save them and lift them up. That preparation was provided, but they did not all want to be prepared.

As people living in the time between the Old Testament promises and prophecies and the time when Jesus returns, we have a vivid picture of what has already been prepared for us. Our task is to regularly allow ourselves to BE PREPARED to receive Christ, the perfect

(continued on page 2)

Reverend Steven M. Taylor, Pastor
Kathy Peck, Program Coordinator/Secretary
Tory and Adam Irgang, Youth Leaders
Jody Marsh, Parish Nurse
Julie Nagel, Music Director/Accompanist
Krista Odell, Accompanist
Art Osborne, Custodian
Pat Sobolewski & Sandy Crossley,
JOY Preschool
Bert and Roberta Anderson - in transition
Dr. Mark and Diane Abbott in Spain
Reverend Peter Perry in Alaska

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

Monday - 9 a.m. - noon

Tuesday - 9 a.m. - noon

Wednesday - 9 a.m. - noon

Wednesday Evening - 6 - 6:45 p.m.

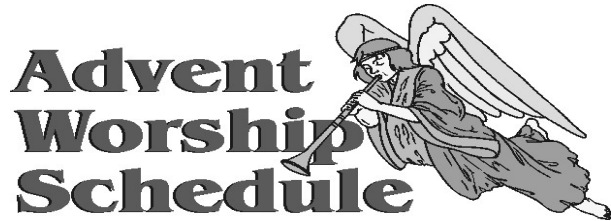
This and That

(From Pastor Steve's Desk, continued)

gift, into our hearts. The most meaningful way to allow God to do that for us is to practice inviting God to invade our lives in the special seasons of the year like Advent.

And this year, may it be the first year...may it be the fullness of time for you and for me as we are prepared for the coming of the Christ child, God with us, Emmanuel. Remember, this is not something that is sudden or unannounced! We all know it's coming...allow yourself to be prepared by the power of the incarnation of God in human form...and in your heart.

Shalom,
Pastor Steve



Date	Time	Event
Sunday, November 28	10:15 a.m.	First Sunday in Advent <i>The Perfect Gift: Jesus, the Word of God</i> Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14
Sunday, December 5	10:15 a.m.	Second Sunday in Advent/Communion <i>The Perfect Gift: Jesus, the Messiah</i> Romans 15:4-13
Sunday, December 12	10:15 a.m.	Third Sunday in Advent <i>The Perfect Gift: Jesus, the Immanuel</i> Isaiah 7:10-16; Matthew 1:18-25
Sunday, December 19	10:15 a.m. 7p.m.	Fourth Sunday in Advent and <i>The Christmas Song</i> (2 presentations)
Friday, December 24	11 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship <i>The Perfect Gift: Jesus, the Christ Child</i> Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
Sunday, December 26	10:15 a.m.	First Sunday of Christmas

Baked goods are needed for the 10 a.m. Fellowship Time on Sunday mornings between Sunday School and Worship. Please sign up on the Welcome Table.

Remember, every Sunday, we will be collecting **loose change** for the **Food Pantry**.

POINSETTIAS - Orders for Poinsettias will be taken at the welcome table through December 8. The cost will be \$7.50 each and color selections are red, white, marble, pink, and burgundy. You may take them home anytime after December 19.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

November 28 - December 19: White Gift Collection
(White envelopes are available on the welcome table or mark your offering envelopes accordingly)

December 10: - Parsonage Open House (6-8 p.m.)

December 19: Celebration Choir presents "The Christmas Song"
(10:15 a.m. and 7 p.m.)

January 8, 2010 - Feast of Epiphany - See article (pg. 11)

Tape Ministry

December 5

Gerrie Simmons* LSS A116
Phyllis Patterson H Green 327
Kathy Smith TW 218
Van Luther TW 208

Julia Nelson
Trudy Anderson
Eloise Smith
Eloise Smith

December 12

Gerrie Simmons* LSS A116
Phyllis Patterson H Green 327
Kathy Smith TW 218
Van Luther TW 208

Everett King
Thea Kester
Lester & Wyona Wevers
Lester & Wyona Wevers

December 19

Gerrie Simmons* LSS A116
Phyllis Patterson H Green 327
Kathy Smith TW 218
Van Luther TW 208

Jean Edwards
Bill Peck
Rachel Reardon
Rachel Reardon

December 26

Gerrie Simmons* LSS A116
Phyllis Patterson H Green 327
Kathy Smith TW 218
Van Luther TW 208

Jack & Linda Sturges
Diane Johnson
Art & Jeanette Osborne
Art & Jeanette Osborne

***No Tape - just a short visit and a bulletin**

Thank You!

Thank you for the cards, emails, and phone calls expressing your sympathy to our family at the passing of my father. He lived a full and long life; we have many good memories. Dad always encouraged learning and that continued in his death as we followed his wish for his body to be donated to the MSU medical students' program.

The prayers and concern of our church family helped and comforted us during this time of grief.

Thank you.

Carol Hay

RECIPE from the Parish Nurse...

OREO BALLS

6 oz. reduced fat cream cheese, softened
4 c. reduced fat Oreos (1 lb. 2 oz. pkg.), crushed in food processor
2 c. chocolate chips, Toll House preferred
1 Tbsp. shortening (optional)

Using an electric mixer on high speed, beat cream cheese until light and fluffy. Add crushed cookies and beat until well combined. Refrigerate 2 hours until chilled enough to roll. Roll dough into 1 inch balls. Over a double boiler, melt chips and shortening until smooth. Dip balls into mixture and thoroughly coat. Place on wax paper to harden. Store in refrigerator.

YOUTH—A LOOK AHEAD

Weekly youth meetings are held for students currently in grades 7-12. Meetings will run from 6-7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted

DECEMBER

12/5 - Youth Meeting
12/12 - Youth Meeting
12/19 - Youth attend Christmas Cantata 7 p.m.
12/26 - No youth / Christmas

JANUARY

1/2 - No Youth/New Year's
1/9 - Youth Meeting
1/16 - Youth Meeting
1/23 - Youth Worship at Frewsburg UMC 6 p.m.
1/30 - Youth Meeting

2010 Annual Church Conference

The PUMC 2010 Church Conference was held following worship and lunch on November 21, 2010, with 45 in attendance. Led by Pastor Steve and Rev. Larry Baird, Cornerstone District Superintendent, the ministry budget for 2011 and the recommendations for Ministry Teams were approved.

Future issues of Grace Notes will highlight our ministry teams and the responsibilities of these committees.

PUMC YOUTH

Whew! It's been a busy few weeks for the teenagers of our church! On November 7 we hosted a Mexican Fiesta after church. Thanks to all who supported our efforts and helped to raise money for special events this spring. As you can see, the Youth loved their sombreros- thanks Mary Rappole! As always, we couldn't do this without such great help from all the parents who donated food and helped out in the kitchen.



The Cornerstone District tried something new this year and hosted a Fall Youth Retreat at Camp Findley on November 12-13. So, instead of traveling to Fall Gathering in Rochester, we stayed closer to home and had a blast. There were plenty of snacks, silly skits, and crazy games but most memorable was the worship in Carsonville Chapel with Pastor Rick and a band led by Dominic Rufrano from Trinity UMC. One great thing about our Youth is that they are always willing to try something new and this event delivered- from Penguin Soccer to Underground Church to meeting new friends from churches who recently became part of the Cornerstone District. We definitely can't wait for the next Youth Worship night hosted by Olean and the Winter Event in February!

*You are invited to an
Open House at the Parsonage
Friday, December 10
6- 8 p.m.*



*Sincere sympathy is extended on behalf of
the PUMC community of faith to:*

Orlo Jackson
whose brother, Kenneth Jackson,
passed away in November.

Prayer Chain

If you have a concern you would like others to pray for, please call Susie Davis (782-4611) or Jean Edwards (782-2800). Your prayer request will be passed down the chain to 20+ others who will pray, and continue to pray, about your situation.



Christian Education Ministry Opportunity

As many of you are aware, for some time the SPRC Team has been working on a Safe Sanctuary policy. The Team has put together a draft of that policy and, although it has not been officially adopted by our Church Council, our Sunday School Team is working towards the requirements for a safe sanctuary. Our goal for Sunday School is to have two adults (or one adult and one assistant under 18) in every children's Sunday School class, Nursery through Grade 12.

Perhaps you have been feeling the Holy Spirit tugging on your heart to step up and help. If you are interested in teaching or being an assistant, please see Carm Catanese or George Anderson and let that be known. Please note that if you can only make a commitment for one or two Sundays a month, it will be a great step towards meeting our goal.

Sunday School is a great place to find and develop gifts that God, through His Holy Spirit, has given to each of us. Please pray about what God would have you do to answer this call.

Thank you!
Christian Education Team.



Belated Congratulations....

to
Jarrett and Elizabeth Wiggers
on the birth of
Adalynn Elizabeth
on October 7, 2010.

Proud grandparents are Steve and Melissa Wiggers.

The PUMC family prays God's richest blessings upon this precious little girl and her family.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

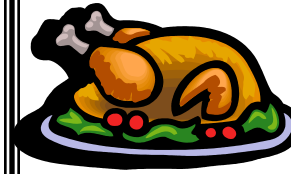
145 SHOEBOXES...what a success!!!!

As our first year of being involved with Operation Shoebox and with heading up the project, we are amazed by the support of such a small church in Panama. It is wonderful to be a part of such a caring and giving group of people.

Thank you to everyone from those that set up the Christmas tree for the PUMC collection sight; to those who purchased items and donated the boxes; to those that helped with the packing and delivering...many hands made the work much faster.

Remember to keep praying for the children that will receive the boxes and for the families all over the world. Thanks again for all of the support to make someone else's Christmas special.

Ken and Katie Braun



2010 Harvest Dinner

Thank you to anyone and everyone who helped in any way to make the 2010 Harvest Dinner and Bazaar such a huge success. Special thanks to Tena and Tim for their organization and leadership in this time of fellowship.

The proceeds totaled \$2,450 and were divided as follows:

- Tithe to PUMC
- Wagon to transport moveable Church sign
- CD and DVD players for Tape Ministry
- Tables for Fellowship Hall
- Roaster Pans (2)
- Kitchen needs
- Donation towards projection system in sanctuary
- Hearts for Haiti
- Music Ministry
- Operation Shoe Box
- White Gift

Thank you to everyone for your support in this annual endeavor!



Feast of Epiphany

On January 8, you are invited to the Rowdy Rooster to celebrate Epiphany with a special feast provided at NO COST! Come as you are at 5:30 p.m. for a time of fellowship, food, and entertainment with special guests, *The Covenant Players*. We'll wrap up the night with a gift exchange that has a special twist. Everyone should bring a wrapped gift to trade and it shouldn't be anything fancy. In fact, this would be a great time to "re-gift" something that didn't quite hit the mark, something you think another might appreciate more, or something funny! Gathering together will help remind us of the visit the Magi made to our Savior and the gifts brought to honor him. Watch the Welcome Table for the reservation list and be sure to sign up by January 2! Make sure to bring the kids because there will be special activities just for them. If you have any questions, please contact the Church Office.

Food Pantry

November is certainly a month for counting blessings! The Pantry is thankful for all the folks who donated goodies for our Thanksgiving bags. We gave out 25 turkeys and 3 large roasting hens along with the makings for a nice holiday dinner.

The month of November saw 112 members of our community being served for a total of 1,008 meals.

We will be putting together “baking bags” for our friends in December. Donations of flour, sugar, powdered sugar, and vanilla will be accepted until December 12. You can also make financial donations and we can shop for you.

We would like to wish all of you a Blessed Christmas season and a Healthy and Happy New Year!!!

Because of your faithfulness...

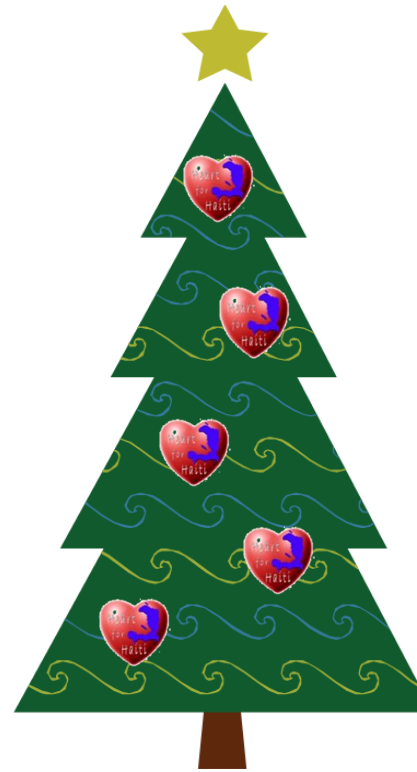
Because of your faithful giving, we have received a total of \$15,946.68 through November 21, 2010, for the general fund.

Additional monies received were designated as follows:

Missions	530.00
JOY Center	120.00
Camping Scholarships	50.00
Heart for Haiti	2,976.00
Food Pantry	25.00
White Gift	12.00
Shoebox Ministry	31.00
Fellowship Time	7.64
Insurance Check/lightning	4,700.00
Hart-Button Scholarship	100.00

Balance in Trustees’ Capital Fund Account—\$7,804.13

We thank you for your faithful giving in support of the ministries of the Panama United Methodist Church.



With this issue of *Grace Notes*, the holidays are well upon us. The Missions Team invites you to add a little joy to someone’s holiday with a gift in their honor. In addition to the annual “post office,” the Mission team is offering bricks symbolizing the building campaign sponsored by ARM for the school in Haiti. Also available are gift cards as another way to donate to the Heart for Haiti campaign. The cost of the bricks or cards is by donation.

We wish peace and joy to all,

The Missions Team

.....NURSERY NOTE.....

If you are unable to be in the nursery for your scheduled Sunday, please ask another person to switch with you. Please let me know that you have switched, too. Thank you so much for your dedication to our young children.

Tina

VBS Thank You from Ethiopia

“Thank you Barb, Staff, and Kids! We received the generous donation from the PUMC VBS! We were able to purchase 103 chickens for 33 families because of your generous gift. The chickens will provide much needed food and a small income for these families. Thank you again!”

Tom and Sally Baer and family

The Elim Fellowship-Six Baer Essentials, Ethiopia