

***From Pastor Steve's Desk...***

Welcome to Panama UMC's *GraceNotes!* This is your source for all things Panama United Methodist. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and find it a great resource and inspiration!

Let me begin by saying THANK YOU to the Panama United Methodist family for all your cards, gifts, and Christmas greetings over the last few weeks. Even though we have been here just a short time, we feel like we're becoming part of the family...what a great gift! We pray God's blessings for you as enter this New Year.

My favorite Christmas hymn is *In the Bleak Midwinter*. You can find this beauty on page 221 in the United Methodist Hymnal. I think it's fitting for me to quote the first and last verse from this song as we enter the throws of winter and the joy of the New Year.

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

The person to whom this song refers as "him" is of course Jesus. The shepherds and wisemen all came from their homelands to visit the Savior and bring him gifts. Those gifts may have been as simple as a lamb for the family or gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Each of those people that came brought what they had...what God had given them to use for God's purposes. In this case, for the purpose of honoring God by giving gifts to his Son, Jesus.

This year, the focus of our worship and discipleship will center on the gifts we have. We will especially be discovering (or re-discovering) and offering our spiritual gifts for God's use. Each of us is just like a shepherd or magi who came to the manger to see the baby Jesus, offering what he or she had for the infant king. We bring the skills, time, money, attitude, and willingness that God has given us to serve the ministries of the church, the community, and the world.

(continued on page 2)

*(From Pastor Steve's Desk, continued)*

The shepherds didn't need to discover what they had to give. The wisemen had a choice of what to bring, but they knew what they could carry. We all have an idea of what gifts we have to use in ministry for Jesus...but we may need some focus to allow us to serve effectively and to fit into the mission and ministry of the Panama UMC and our community. We will spend some time searching ourselves to find out what gives us passion...motivation...what we LOVE to do. For some, that gift is encouraging others. For others, it's serving, music, preaching, teaching, leading, or being a mentor. What is it for you? Do you know how you will serve from where you are? How will you give all you have to the work of Christ? How will it fit with your brothers and sisters serving by your side? As more people come to Panama UMC, how will we invite them to serve along side us?

This New Year, maybe you made some resolutions for better health or better attitude. Add one more...resolve this year to begin serving in ONE additional way in ministry. If you're serving in too many, resolve to mentor someone else to join you. One person...one name...invite them to be in ministry. Bring Him your heart...

Shalom,  
*Pastor Steve*



***Congratulations on the arrivals of:***  
***Arianna Belva - born December 2, 2010***  
***Parents: Buck and Kristine Seekings***  
***and***

***Kiana Rae - born December 6, 2010***  
***Parents: Nelson and Kandi (Catanese) Torres***  
***Grandparents: Sam and Carm Catanese***

***We pray God's love and blessing  
upon these two little girls.***

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**CHURCH STAFF**

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 Center  
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.



Dear Friends,

It has been a most wonderful Christmas season. We have been blessed with being able to spend time with friends and family. Many of you know what it is like to be separated from family at this time of year. We pray that the pain of separation is fleeting, that the memories of joyful celebrations of the past will warm your heart.

We will be leaving for Haiti soon. We look forward to the start of this new project. It is amazing the way God prepares you for each stage of your life. We will try to send back timely updates of the progress on the new health center. Debbie Berquist, Field Director, posts updates on line frequently at [www.lazarusprojecthaiti.org](http://www.lazarusprojecthaiti.org). Hopefully, we will follow her example.

As we prepare to leave, we will remember all of you and your kindness and generosity. We pray that the Holy Spirit is with you always. May His comfort be your strength and peace for the new year.

Blessings,  
Bert & Roberta  
bertandbert@gmail.com

#### A Note From Charlie...

Christmas festivities started early in Panama when there was a community wide celebration. I scurried down to take a peek at what was going on, and I saw several children and adults from our church ringing the bells to gather money and support the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign. I saw a note on Kathy's desk which stated that those people who braved the cold that day, collected \$167.23. What an accomplishment! I am so happy to be a part of such a loving community.

The cantata, "The Christmas Song," was very well attended for both presentations. I watched from my ledge upstairs and was just so in awe of the music and the feelings that were in my heart that day. I just love all the music that I hear so often in our church.

I trust that you all had a wonderful Christmas, and I pray all good things for each and every one of you in 2011. God bless you all.

Love,  
Charlie



## Sunday Morning Worship Team

### January

#### Lay Readers

1/2 - Tina Shaver  
1/9 - Bill Peck  
1/16 - Thea Kester  
1/23 - Brenda Ireland  
1/30 - Stacy Taylor

#### Ushers

Dave and Yvonne Calcaterra  
Tina Shaver and Logan Hickman

#### Nursery Helpers

1/2 - Yvonne Calcaterra and Alyssa Jaeger  
1/9 - Barb and Lauren Tordella  
1/16 - Carol Hay and Sarah Osborne  
1/23 - Stacy and Abby Taylor  
1/30 - Tina Shaver and Corinne Edwards\

### February

#### Lay Readers

2/6 - Carol Hay  
2/13 - Karen Morton  
2/20 - Jody Marsh  
2/27 - Dave Calcaterra

#### Ushers

Jerry and Pam Ireland  
Joel and Jessica Keefer

#### Nursery Helpers

2/6 - Karen Morton and Lauren Tordella  
2/13 - Tina Shaver and Logan Hickman  
2/20 - Julia Nelson and Corinne Edwards  
2/27 - Kelly and Sarah Osborne

## *Tape Ministry*

### January 2

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

Sharon Passarelli  
Barbara Hart  
Trudy Anderson  
Trudy Anderson

### January 9

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

Lester & Wyona Wevers  
Julia Nelson  
Thea Kester  
Thea Kester

### January 16

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

Bill Peck  
Jean Edwards  
Eloise Smith  
Eloise Smith

### January 23

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

Diane Johnson  
Jack & Linda Sturges  
Rachel Reardon  
Rachel Reardon

### January 30

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

Art & Jeanette Osborne  
Sharon Passarelli  
Barbara Hart  
Barbara Hart

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

#### Tape Ministry Information

The tape ministry is in need of 3 or 4 more people to deliver tapes to the shut-ins. Some people have decided not to deliver anymore and others go south for the winter. We may have to deliver every other week if we can't get any more volunteers. Please consider this ministry, as you may want it someday. Please call Bill Peck if you would like to be a part of this team..

### Recipe from the Parish Nurse

#### **Chocolate Chip Peanut Butter Pie**

1/2 c. reduced fat peanut butter  
4 oz. light cream cheese  
4 oz. fat free cream cheese 1  
12 oz. fat free sweetened condensed milk  
2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice  
1 c. lite whipped topping, thawed  
5 Tbsp. mini chocolate chips, divided  
1 pie crust

In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat peanut butter and both types of cream cheese until smooth. Gradually beat in milk and lemon juice. Fold in whipped topping and 4 Tbsp. of mini chocolate chips. Spoon peanut butter mixture into prepared pie crust and smooth top. Chop remaining Tbsp. of chocolate chips. Sprinkle over top. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze until firm, at least 4 hours.

### 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

#### JANUARY

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

(Meetings are subject to change)

## Band of Brothers

As I write this, I am pondering as to where the year has gone. It is hard for me to believe that one year has passed since I was asked about heading up the group. I had some big shoes to fill and really didn't know what to expect. GOD is faithful, as I prayed about this endeavor and realized that it wasn't about "Howie," that this was all about GOD. Isn't that the way life is? We so often stand in the way of what GOD has for us.

I have seen GOD working in our church in so many ways, In the men's group, HE has revealed Himself to me and to many of the men as we have gathered around the table to honor HIM. I am so blessed to be part of this. I look forward to what GOD has for us in the New Year.

We plan to keep on the same schedule that we have been on with one Tuesday night a month, starting at 7 p.m. and one Saturday a month, with a breakfast at 8am. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 11, 2011 at 7 p.m. Our next breakfast will be Saturday, January 22, at 8 a.m.

I'd like you to mark your calendar for May 6 and 7 (Friday evening and Saturday). There will be a men's retreat at Camp Findley. Watch your bulletins and Grace Notes for further information..

May God bless you all in the New Year,  
Howie Wheeler

### Evangelism and Outreach Team

The E and O Team will be having a meeting on Tuesday, January 4, at 6:30. Please plan to attend.



*Sincere sympathy is extended on behalf of  
the PUMC community of faith to  
the family of  
Marion Blackmore  
who passed away in early December.*

### 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.



### Women and Missions (WAM)

You are invited to join other women of the church for lunch on Monday, January 10. Please come to the Rowdy Rooster at 11:45. Reservations are not necessary. This gathering is purely an informal time of fellowship and discussion.

We hope to see YOU there!



## A CHOIR NOTE.....

This year's cantata measures up with some cantatas for recent years. There were moments of joy, laughter, love, tears and some very nice music. Thanks to all who participated and extra thanks to Julie and Krista who put endless hours into practice.

The one thing that sets this cantata apart from many in past years is the number of "first time" cantata singers. For those who think one voice doesn't make a difference...you could not be more wrong. To go from a choir of 20-30 voices on a weekly basis, to one that was 45+ strong made a huge difference and many told us so. It is your unique voice that God mixes into the pot and pours out the beautiful harmonies for all to hear. Special thanks go out to the "cantata newbies," and we hope that this was a pleasant experience for you as we enjoyed your company. We hope that like many before you, your cantata seat will become your choir seat. I, myself, and many others know from experience that it only takes one person to ask another person to sing one time for one cantata to turn you into a choir "lifer".. What better life sentence could you ask for than to be singing praises to and for your Lord and Savior! Again, thanks! We hope to see each of you sitting in the choir 2011.

*Submitted by a Choir Lifer*

*(P.S. - we practice on Wednesday nights, starting on January 4.)*



# Feast of Epiphany

*"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." Matthew 2:11*

**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 will 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.**

**Because of your faithfulness...**

Because of your faithful giving, we have received a total of \$18,759.37 through December 26, 2010, for the general fund. This is an average of \$4,689.84 per week. There is, however, a \$2,444.71 deficit for the month to meet our budgeted expenses.

Additional monies received were designated as follows:

Missions	490.00
JOY Center	120.00
Camping Scholarships	10.00
Heart for Haiti	3,424.00
Food Pantry	75.00
White Gift	731.00
Fellowship Time	20.00
Youth Programs	100.00
Advent Donation	50.00
Music Ministry	25.00
Flowers	203.00

Balance in Trustees' Capital Fund Account - \$14,008.21.

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

If you would like giving envelopes for 2011 and there is not a box labeled for you on the Welcome Table, please see Cindy Cartwright, or let Kathy know in the Church office.

**Thank You from the Food Pantry**

Thank you to all the folks who donated so graciously over the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays so that our community had a little nicer holiday!

Our Food Pantry "Wish List" includes:

- Toilet Paper
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Egg Noodles

We appreciate your continued support of this important ministry of the PUMC.

**A Note from the Christian Ed. Department**

We would like to thank everyone who gave towards the White Gift! Thanks to your generosity, we are able to help those in our community who need it most. Jesus said when you did it for those, you did it for me. What a blessing! We would also like to remind you that we have started a white Gift Fund with \$500 from the money we collected this year. That money is going to be available to help those who need it when they need it. If you would like, you may continue to give towards the White Gift Fund throughout the year. May God bless you for your efforts to help others.

Webster's defines a habit as a tendency to repeat an act again and again. As all of us know, habits can be hard to break and hard to make. With that in mind, we would like you to consider making a habit during the Sunday School hour. A habit that is sure to bless your life again and again! We have 5 adult classes and they are waiting for you to join in. Many have already developed a habit of regular attendance. Those who have developed a habit will certainly share with you how and why they are able to be there every week and what a blessing it is. In fact, they wouldn't miss it! Join us as we study God's word together. Find out what God desires for your life through Sunday School. We have children's classes for every age group, and we have Jr. and Sr. High classes. There are classes for everyone and exciting topics besides. Please join us and make a new habit for the coming year. We're so sure you won't be disappointed that if you are, for any reason, you can ask your teacher for a free pass. Of course, the free pass may only be used to another class so make your choice today to come to Sunday School and bring your friends and family with you.

**.....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