



PEACENOTES



December

Peace United Church of Christ, 37 East Swartzville Road, Denver, PA 17517

PASTOR'S PAGE

Every Pastor who has ever served a church for more than a couple of years has stories to tell. We often joke that in retirement we will write a book and disclose all those stories. Of course names will be changed to protect the innocent and not so innocent. And often those stories center in on Christmas Pageants that have gone awry. There are the stories where the children playing the sheep acted too much like sheep scattering, baaing and bleating more than needed and at the most inopportune times. There is the story where a boy and girl – Mary and Joseph – were walking down the center aisle while the Christmas Story was being read. Now during rehearsal the story was read from the King James Bible, but there was a last minute change. A couple of mothers decided to use a more contemporary version so that the children could understand it better. The line, “and she was with child”, was changed to, “And Mary was pregnant.” The Joseph character stopped in his tracks and said, “PREGNANT! Whadda you mean, you’re PREGNANT!” He suddenly understood the reality of the story!

And even though the hymn says, “the little Lord Jesus no crying he makes”, there have been babies that have broken out into a full fledged wail. And one who chose the fill his diaper to overflowing and filled the little Sanctuary with a very real human odor.

Truth of the matter is that those imperfect pageants are probably closer to the reality of that first Christmas than we would like to admit.

Jesus was born in a barn and laid in a feeding trough. The sweet smell of hay was over powered by the odor of animals. Mary cried out in pain during labor and delivery. And given the infant mortality rates of the time, Mary and Joseph worried about the survival of this child.

The truth is that incarnation is very messy business. The truth of the incarnation, the truth that there was no room for them in the Inn and the truth that there was a King who sought to take this child’s life, shatters the calm, quiet, Silent Night Christmas depicted on so many cards.

But the truth is that God embarked on this journey, a journey that would lead to a lonely hill called Golgotha, not because God needed us, not because we desired God’s abundant grace, but because of God’s great and abundant love for us.

We all face struggles and difficulties in life as did Mary, Joseph and Jesus. This Christmas Season may we discover, in the midst of our joys and struggles, the presence and comfort of the Christ who was born in Bethlehem of Judea!

Pastor Bill

► Check it out!

To e-mail the pastor, use

pastor@peaceunitedchurch.org

To e-mail items to the secretary, use

secretary@peaceunitedchurch.org

Church Council Officers

2014

John Haldeman, *Council President*
Bobbi Porter-Kunkel, *Council Vice-President*
Bev Madara, *Council Secretary*
Margaret Harting, *Financial Secretary*
Mike Madara, *Treasurer*
Jack Bernsel, *Administrator*

ELDERS

John Haldeman484-2510
Bobbi Porter-Kunkel.....610-678-0543
Bev Madara.....484-0895
Vicki Garner-Sweigart.....336-2307
Pat Hall.....484-4658
Jill Kegerise.....336-2421

DEACONS

Cindy Anthony.....335-2643
Vaye Freeman.....445-7601
Fran Hollen.....725-0751
Janice Kohl.....391-2890
Amy Miller.....484-1948
Nancy Reese.....484-4659
Vicky Schweitzer.....808-9823
Pat Wolf.....336-2272

HEAD USHER

Vicki Garner-Sweigart

ALTAR GUILD

Edie Graff
Dixie Schweitzer

GREETERS

December 7 Barry and Pat Harting
December 14 Ray and Bobbie Kunkel
December 21 Art and Karen Pannebecker
December 24 John and Mary Getz
December 28 Erla Hartranft

ALTAR FLOWERS

December 7 Art and Karen Pannebecker
December 14 Claude and Bertha Adair
December 21 Jay and Stacy Burkey
December 28 Ron and Carol Parker



The deadline for submitting articles for the January issue of Peace Notes is December 20th.

Please put your information in the hanging folder labeled "Peace Notes" located on the Secretary's desk or email it to: secretary@peaceunitedchurch.org

Thank you!

Note: This email address can also be used for information to be printed in the Sunday bulletin.

December Birthdays

- December 2** Bev Martin
Judy High
Margo Murphy
- December 5** Scott Lausch
Jason Getz
Becky Moyer
- December 7** Bruce Palsgrove
- December 8** Joshua Kurtz
- December 10** Carol Parker
- December 12** Nancy Leshner
- December 15** Art Pannebecker
Tim Heil
- December 17** Heather Burky
- December 18** Duane Good
- December 19** Georgean Bixler
- December 20** Brittany Sheaffer
- December 24** Bob Martin
- December 25** Paul Freeman**
- December 26** Ann Kohl
- December 30** Samuel Leshner
- December 31** Betty Leisey**

** Special Care and Concern Member

Please remember these members with a card that can be placed in the birthday box in the Narthex.

December Anniversaries

- December 3** Wes and Hazel Sweigart
- December 14** William and Martha Young
- December 23** Harold and Ann Kohl

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary this month? Was your information incorrect? If so, please send the correct information to secretary@peaceunitedchurch.org or place a note in the Peace Notes envelope on the secretary's desk.

Thank You's

Peace UCC,
Thank you so much for all of your prayers. It meant so much to me that so many people were thinking about me. I am so blessed for all of the support I have been given. God's love is great.

*Thank you all,
Megan High*

Thank you for the fruit baskets. We have been so blessed this past year with cards, visits and helping with car services. This is a wonderful church.

*Love,
Pierce & Ethel Leshner*

Thank you all for your thoughts, prayers, and cards while I was in the hospital and thank you to Pastor Bill for his visits. It meant a lot to me to know that so many of you were thinking of me.

Mike Madara

PEACE PANTRY



There will be no Peace Pantry collections for December

Holiday Craft Show a Success

Special thanks goes out to everyone who helped in any way to make the craft show a fundraising success. The final tally raised for the Capital Campaign Fund was \$1,340.

Much appreciation goes to the crafters who offered their handiwork for sale, and to Pat Acebo for her help in planning and advertising. Thanks to the members of the Adult Ministry Committee and all others who worked in the kitchen and ran the baked goods stand. Thanks to those who provided baked goods and to the many volunteers who worked in any way to make the event run smoothly. Set-up and clean-up help is also greatly appreciated. Thanks to Ralph Good for donating potato chips and to Keith Hoffert for making the vegetable soup. Thanks to all the shoppers who supported the crafters, as well as the food and baked goods stand. It was a great day of fellowship for all involved, and an excellent opportunity to show the community an important facet of Peace Church.



Donna Reinhart & Barb Hoffert

ADVENT EVENTS

November 30 - First Sunday of Advent

December 7 – Hanging of the Greens – Join us as we decorate the church for Advent and Christmas and then for a fellowship meal.



December 14 – Special Christmas Program

December 21 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Join us and invite your friends to a special time as we remember God’s great gift to us in the Child of Bethlehem. The service will begin at 7:30; special music will begin about 15 minute prior to the service. The evening

will conclude with a Candlelight Memorial. This is truly a night to remember.

HEALTH AND WELFARE



On Sunday, December 7th after worship, in the fellowship hall, the Health and Welfare committee will be wrapping items for their Colonial Lodge visit and Christmas Party on Thursday, December 11th and putting them into Santa's bag. Bring your scissors and join the fun.

On Thursday, December 11th at 6:15 pm the Health and Welfare committee, and anyone else who would like to join us, will be going to Colonial Lodge for a Christmas party. Christmas carols will be sung accompanied by rhythm instruments, a craft will be made, refreshments served and Santa will be handing out gifts.

Each year Peace Church remembers their Special Care and Concern Members with a Christmas and birthday care package. At Christmas we always include a bag of home-made cookies with their Christmas cards. Christmas cards for each SCC Member can be placed in the Christmas box in the Narthex. We also invite you to bring a plate of your favorite Christmas cookies to Hanging of the Greens on Sunday, December 7th to share with our SCC members when the Health and Welfare Committee packs their Christmas bags.

We also remember our SCC Members on their birthdays. We ask you to sign a card for each of them, place them in the birthday card box in the Narthex so that their sponsor may deliver the cards in time for their birthdays. Again, no postage or stamp is needed, place your cards in the box and the Health and Welfare Committee will separate and pack them.

The Health and Welfare Committee will be meeting Sunday January 4th, 2015 after church.

LIFE LINE SCREENING



Life Line Screening will be hosting a health screening event in our Fellowship Hall on Thursday, February 26th. Please look for details in future Peace Notes and Sunday Morning Bulletins.

TURNING THE TIDE

If you are interested in exploring the ways in which you can help your church grow and set a new pace and direction for the future, we invite you to join us for a Faith Exploration/Growing the Church Event on Sunday Evening, January 18 at 5:00 pm. Come, see what we have tried and see what we yet might do!

SOME FACTS ABOUT OUR FUTURE

It is not my intent to paint a picture of doom and gloom but rather share some facts, opinions and a touch of reality.

On November 9th, 2014, at our Annual Congregational Meeting, we approved a budget for 2015 with a \$30,000 deficit. We will carry over a deficit from 2014 of approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 and our Securing our Future campaign ends on March 1st, 2015. The campaign was quite successful and I thank you for your generosity. Our goal was \$108,000 and to date we have received approximately \$92,000. The purpose of the campaign was to pay for our new roof, pay back our \$12,000 loan to Benevolence Fund and build a cushion for our other funds. We were successful in 2 out of 3 of our goals. We paid for the roof and our loan balance of \$1,500 will be paid off by March 1st. But we failed to build the much needed cushion to our other funds. Every quarter for the past 2 years, we have had to transfer in the neighborhood of \$5,000-\$8,000 of campaign money to the general fund to meet operating expenses. This was due to an unex-

pected decrease in general offering primarily because of dwindling attendance, a lack of new members and a still troubled economy. When I look at the numbers, general giving was not affected significantly by the campaign, so I do not foresee a significant increase in general giving when the campaign ends. Basically, the campaign has kept us financially stable. Our congregation has been very generous and I would feel foolish asking you to dig deeper. However, I do ask you to review your giving habits and if you see an opportunity to offer a few dollars more and still remain in your comfort zone, it would be greatly appreciated.

I strongly believe that by the 3rd quarter of next year we will not be able to meet our monthly and quarterly financial obligations solely on our weekly giving. That worries me and raises a very important question---where do we come up with the additional monies needed to fill the shortfall?

Two options come to mind: Option #1 - We start a new campaign to generate the needed funding. I find this undesirable. If a church needs a campaign to generate funds to cover operating expenses, it is definitely struggling and it does not send a good message to the community or potential new members. Option #2 - We borrow money from the Benevolence Fund. Again, an undesirable move as the Benevolence Fund was not created to be our personal loan department. It deprives us of the opportunity to reach out and help others as the fund was intended to do. In my mind that is the start of a downhill spiral to the failure of the church. Unfortunately, these might be our only options.

It is not a doom and gloom situation –yet. But we have a sizable challenge ahead of us with maybe a 3-5 year window of opportunity to address it. I feel we need to be as proactive as possible, get all of our “ducks in a row” and have a plan in place and execute it properly if we want to survive as a church.

I have asked church council to start focusing on and having discussions to research and develop all options that might be feasible to provide the funding we need. I have asked Pastor Bill to generate a list of obligations we might have with synod and to inquire if they offer any guidance. I want to know in advance that, if push comes to shove, at what point

do we look into possible mergers with other churches experiencing a more dire situation than we are. In the meantime we must consider reaching out to members of neighboring churches that might be closing their doors due to similar circumstances and open our doors to them. I know that sounds a little drastic and a little selfish but I want to be as well prepared for success as we can be.

However it is not all about money---it's about attendance, and being active in the life of your church. It's about getting our inactive members back in the loop again and attracting new members. We blame the influx of mega churches and the declining role that our faith and the church has on today's society for most of our problems. Sometime we need to point the finger at ourselves---did we do the right things, do we offer programs, activities and learning experiences that people are looking for. Through Stewardship Committee and various other ventures, we have made a number of attempts to address what we thought were the issues. Unfortunately we were not all that successful. At times we dropped the ball and did not follow through thoroughly enough with our plans or were hesitant to spend money to do things more assertively. We started to offer a contemporary service with good leadership but maybe a little too late and without the proper tools needed to help it grow. Unfortunately, I'm certain we lost some members for that reason. We need to come up with new ideas and spend the time, effort, and money to do it correctly in order to reap the benefits.

Pastor Bill and I have had numerous private conversations sharing our thoughts and concerns about the future of our church. By his suggestion, Pastor Bill will be forming a committee to discuss what we need to do to secure the future of our church. They will look at every aspect of concern. Quite often the same people serve on various committees and there is a tendency for our vision to get blurred--so we hope to call on some of our lifelong members and those who have a genuine interest in the future of the church to serve on that committee. Pastor Bill has already started to generate an agenda and we hope to be up and running by January.

If I made you feel a bit uneasy today about the future of your church -- good. That was my intent.

Once again, this is not a message of doom and gloom but these are serious concerns we are facing. I want to ensure that we are all aware of what lies ahead of us, so we can address it successfully together.

I tossed around a number of thoughts on how to end this presentation, but none seemed appropriate, so I will close with a message straight from my heart---Peace Church has been MY church for 28 years. I have served in a variety of capacities and plan to continue doing so. This church, this congregation, and the pastor of this church have had a tremendously positive influence on my faith and my spiritual life. It has never been stronger or healthier. I commit to doing my best to see that the doors of this church will always be open---I hope I can depend on your support to do the same.

Respectfully,
John E. Haldeman
Church Council President

**PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COUNCIL MEETING
November 11, 2014**

Attendees: Pastor Bill Hoch, John Haldeman, Bobbie Porter-Kunkle, Mike Madara, Bev Madara, Cindy Anthony, Vicki Garner-Sweigart, Janice Kohl, Fran Hollen, Amy Miller
Excused: Pat Hall, Pat Wolf, Vaye Freeman and Nancy Reese.
Unexcused: Vickie Schweitzer and Jill Kegerise.

President John Haldeman brought the council meeting of Peace United Church of Christ to order on Tuesday, November 11, 2014. Pastor Bill started the meeting off with devotions and prayer.

Review of last month's minutes -- Vicki Garner-Sweigart made a motion to accept the minutes as presented and Cindy Anthony seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report -- Giving exceeded expenses in October by \$5223.00. Weinhold, Nickel & Company will be auditing the books for us. Fran Hollen made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as

presented and Janice Kohl seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ACCOUNT BALANCES - 10/31/2014	OCTOBER
FUNDS SUMMARY	END BALANCE
CHECKING ACCOUNT	\$3,258.60
MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT	(\$8,132.77)
GENERAL FUND ACCOUNT (COMBINED)	(\$4,874.17)
CAP HOLDING ACCOUNT (LIQUID CD)	\$25,056.72
MEMORIAL FUND (MMA)	\$10,812.19
YOUTH FUND (MMA)	\$880.65
CAP CAMPAIGN (MMA) \$90,235.96	\$2,260.00
PETTY CASH	\$75.00
ACCOUNT BALANCES	\$34,210.39
CAP IMPROVEMENT CHECKING	\$3,191.79
CAP IMPROVEMENT LIQUID CD	\$16,045.01
CAP IMPROVEMENT FUND TOTAL	\$19,236.80
ENDOWMENT CHECKING (RESTRICTED USE)	\$9,088.89
ENDOWMENT LIQUID CD (RESTRICTED USE)	\$36,595.68
ENDOWMENT CDS (RESTRICTED USE)	\$102,925.31
MONEY FUNDS (CETERA)	\$4,971.97
MUTUAL FUNDS (CETERA)	\$159,686.60
ENDOWMENT FUND TOTAL	\$313,268.45
TOTAL FUNDS BALANCE	\$366,715.64
GENERAL FUND LOAN BALANCE	\$2,000.00

Administrator's Report - All outside work for the fall has been finished. Bob Plank trimmed the pine trees. The leak on the roof has been fixed.

If there is an event at the church where we can use placemats, please use them. We have over 10,000 of them in the storage room.

John Haldeman has been organizing and taking inventory in the kitchen. John got a 60 day free membership from BJ's and he is comparison shopping to try and save money on supplies. He has found that we can save a lot of money at BJ's and he would like to get a BJ's membership and credit card

for the church next year after his free trial membership expires. Vicki Garner Sweigart made a motion to get the church a BJ's membership and Janice Kohl seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report - Pastor Bill reminded council members to make sure the attendance count is recorded on the sheets when completing the Sunday paperwork.

Pastor Bill will be forming a new committee to discuss growing the church. This committee will be taking over some of the responsibilities of the stewardship committee. First meeting will be December 15th at 7 pm. There will be a presentation called Turning the Tide, which will be shown to the church sometime next year, where we will discuss ways to grow the church.

Life Line Screening would like to use the fellowship hall on Tuesday, February 24th for their screening event. Fran Hollen made a motion to allow Lifeline to do so and Cindy Anthony seconded the motion. Motion carried.

New council members will be installed on January 4th.

Pastor Bill- would like to take vacation on December 28th and he will find a supply pastor to fill in for him.

Hand sanitizers have been placed around the church for you to use this winter. Please use them each time you are here to help keep everybody healthy.

Children and Youth Ministry Report – They are working on a Christmas program for December 14th. Themes of the program will be Voices United and Traditions. Voices United is going to be a combined effort with the kids and the choir. They will also look at different Christmas traditions possibly including Spanish, African and German.

Spiritual Council Report - No report.

Budget and Finance Report - No report.

Stewardship Committee Report - No report.

Outreach Report - No report.

Youth Report - No report.

Benevolence Committee Report – Benevolence committee will meet on December 1st. Jim Gress will be joining the committee to replace Cliff Youndt, who has resigned.

Adult Ministry Report – Everybody had a good time at the Apple Cookoff. Approximately \$246 was raised for the capital campaign. November 22nd is the craft show. Baked goods can be dropped off Friday evening or early Saturday morning. Hanging of the greens will be December 7th.

Health and Welfare Report - Three Thanksgiving baskets will be put together for needy families, and this Sunday is the deadline to donate items for those baskets. The Colonial Lodge Christmas party will be held on December 11th.

Altar Guild Report - Poinsettias can be ordered on Sunday, November 30th, December 7th, and December 14th. They will be placed in the church on December 20th. Cost will be \$7.00.

Old Business – John reminded ushers to check the white capital campaign box each Sunday and to make sure lights have been turned off in the bathrooms while locking up.

New Business – The hanging of greens supplies will be laid out in Fellowship hall by December 7th.

We have found enough replacements for Council members who are leaving. We need to find a replacement for Pat Wolf who has extra work duties and can no longer serve. Janice Kohl made a motion to nominate John Haldeman to replace Pat Wolf and finish out the last year of her term. Cindy Anthony seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The next council meeting will be Tuesday, December 9, 2014. Being no further business, Vicki Garner-Sweigart motioned to adjourn and Fran Hollen seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.
Respectfully submitted,
Bev Madara - Council Secretary

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

T	S	M	U	O	M	A	R	D	A	Q	G	M	E	Z
W	H	N	K	I	B	Y	S	C	S	P	H	Z	M	N
B	I	G	X	N	D	W	R	X	Y	A	I	Z	W	V
E	X	W	I	V	A	J	Q	R	T	S	K	M	V	C
T	S	E	I	N	O	Z	A	O	H	V	F	A	Z	Y
C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	R	M	N	R	Y	U
P	E	A	E	L	E	N	T	R	E	G	N	A	M	W
C	P	P	D	W	T	M	E	H	E	L	H	T	E	B
L	H	B	F	V	I	U	E	L	K	T	Z	S	U	O
H	E	S	U	S	E	J	S	N	I	A	H	M	R	A
F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	G	V	Q
I	D	W	M	L	Y	D	T	Q	G	O	L	D	G	Z
X	S	Y	V	P	A	R	M	O	S	P	T	Y	G	V
S	Q	U	L	F	H	R	N	G	Q	G	D	P	L	W
R	C	S	X	E	U	H	L	Y	T	R	R	M	Q	U

ADVENT
ANGELS
BETHLEHEM
CHRISTMAS
FRANKINCENSE
GOLD
JESUS
JOSEPH
MANGER
MARY
MYRRH
NAZARETH
SHEPHERDS
SILENT NIGHT
STAR
THREE KINGS
WISE MEN

December 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7 pm Benevo- lence Committee Brad & Amy Wolf	2 1 pm Bible Study Dan & Sheree Wolf	3 7 pm Choir Re- hearsal Devon & Michelle Wolf	4 Pat Wolf	5 Bob & Penny Wolfe	6 Ray & Carolyn Wolverton
7 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Traditional Worship 10:45 am – Contem- porary Service Hanging of the Greens Cliff & Audrey Youndt	8 Connie Youndt	9 1 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Spir- itual Council 7 pm Church Council Kenneth & Helen Youndt	10 7 pm Choir Re- hearsal Kerry Youndt	11 6:30 pm Christ- mas at Colonial Lodge Lester & Dolly Youndt	12 William & Martha Young	13 Michael & Theresa Youtz
14 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Traditional Worship 10:45 am – Contem- porary Service Raymond Ziemer	15 7 pm Futuring Committee Joe & Pat Acebo	16 1 pm Bible Study Claude & Ber- tha Adair	17 7 pm Choir Re- hearsal Michael & Cindy Ander- son	18 Matt & Cindy Anthony	19 Matthew & Danelle Bai- ley	20 9 am Poinsettias placed in church George & El- eanor Bailey
21 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Traditional Worship 10:45 am – Contem- porary Service Jody & Barb Beck- er	22 Jack & Mary Bernstel	23 No Bible Study Alice Binns	24 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Ser- vice Craig Bixler	25 Merry Christmas Georgan Bixler	26 Melvin Bow- man	27 Jay & Stacy Burkey
28 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Traditional Worship 10:45 am – Contem- porary Service Glenn Burky	29 Maxine Burky	30 No Bible Study Melissa Burky	31 Happy New Year's Eve Robert Burky			

PEACE NOTES

Peace United Church of Christ
37 East Swartzville Road
Denver, PA 17517

Return Service Requested

December Events

December 7th – Hanging of the Greens
December 11th – Christmas at Colonial Lodge – 6:30 pm
December 24th – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – 7:30 pm

Peace United Church of Christ
37 East Swartzville Road
Denver, PA 17517
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pastor@peaceunitedchurch.org
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Rev. William E. Hoch, Pastor
(717-335-0387)

Beverly Madara, Editor
secretary@peaceunitedchurch.org
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December 2014