

The Friendly News

The First Presbyterian Church of Woodbury Heights MERRY CHRISTMAS 2015 (December and January)

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends,

Dottie saw a T-shirt in a catalog that she wants to get me for Christmas. It is black with the following logo printed on it: GOD >.

Now, if you know math (the new math and the old math), you know what this logo means – God is greater than You can fill in the blank with anything you choose.

Like fear. Worries. Frustrations. Cancer.



Terrorists. Pain. Loneliness. Hunger. Poverty. Alienation. I could go on, but I don't need to, I'm sure, because you can all fill in the blank with a lot of things

in your own lives.

And that logo, with all of its blanks filled in, is what Christmas is all about. God sent His son into His world (for it is His world first and foremost) to remind us that we will not be victims anymore, to remind us that life, with all of its difficulties, cannot break us, to remind us that He is in charge.

Jesus might have been born as a baby, laid in a simple manger and entrusted to very ordinary parents, but in that stable in Bethlehem was all the power in the universe, all the power offered to us that we might be able to face each day strong,

assured, comforted and empowered to live free of all that might try to lay hold to another logo: > me.

May this Christmas season be one in which we all prepare room in our lives for the one who is > anything that might enter into our lives.

In Christ, John



Prayers for healing are lifted up for Nicholas Zorio, Lois Cooper, Bob Sincavage, Chuck Elliott, Pat McDonnell, Joy Love, Clay Cary and Kim DiNoia.

Our sympathy is extended to Bonnie Sweeney's family, including her sister, Pat McDonnell, as they grieve her loss.

A big thank you to our recently elected officers:

Elders -- Charles Bagnell, Barrie Dawson, Bonnie Dawson, Connie Harley and Jake Mangano;

Deacons -- Nancy MacDermott, Pat McDonnell, Peg Schoen, Dottie Shedwick and Ada White.

And **thank you** to our **outgoing officers**: Diane Belcher, Brad Gilmore, Jeff Brenner, Clay Cary and Kim DiNoia.

Upcoming sermons:

Dec 6: The Song of Joachim

Dec 13: The Song of Simeon

Dec 20: The Song of the High Priest

Dec 24 (7 p.m.) The Dawdling Shepherd and (11 p.m.) The Song of Us

Dec 27: Vacation/guest pastor

DECEMBER

Birthdays

- 1 -- John David Geserick
- 1 -- Nicholas Long
- 3 -- Joe Martino, Jr.
- 3 -- Rachel Outten
- 4 -- Shannon Woodrow
- 5 -- Lilliana DeFinizio
- 6 -- Russell Robinson
- 8 -- Jimmy Clyde
- 11 -- John Battle
- 12 -- Ada White
- 22 -- Samantha Fennimore
- 23 -- Jeanette Palmer
- 24 -- Matthew Davis
- 24 -- Winnie Higgins
- 24 -- Stacey Spinosi
- 25 -- JESUS
- 26 -- Michael Golding
- 26 -- Patrick Schoen, Jr.

- 27 -- Holly Golding
- 29 -- Phil String
- 30 -- Jerry Baker
- 30 -- Brett McMichael
- 30 -- Alexander Pizarro

Anniversaries

- 7 -- Kenny and Samantha Eachus
- 13 -- Jeff and Kim Swanson
- 17 -- Chuck and Joyce Elliott
- 20 -- Matt and Melissa Woodrow
- 21 -- Patrick and Peg Schoen
- 22 -- Richard and Joy Love
- 27 -- Dave and Linda Kershaw
- 29 -- Quint Lerch and Judy Grantham



If we missed you, let us know

For the last month, the deacons and elders have been working together (what a concept!) to update our birthdays and anniversaries lists.

We realize these lists are incomplete, and for that we apologize. If your birthday or anniversary isn't listed, please, please, please send an email to whpresby@comcast.net and tell us so we can do better next time.

JANUARY

Birthdays

- 1 -- Liz Billings
- 2 -- Isabella Sammacicci
- 3 -- Bea Truitt
- 5 -- Karen Bagnell
- 5 -- Jean Woodrow
- 7 -- Eric Williamson
- 9 -- Paul G. Belcher
- 10 -- Kim Lambert Sharp
- 10 -- Bonnie Lee Wilson
- 11 -- Laura Seidemann
- 14 -- Kathy Pedicone
- 14 -- Michael Urion
- 15 -- Nolan Becker
- 16 -- Jim Golding

- 18 -- David J. Belcher
- 18 -- Michael McCabe
- 21 -- Matt Woodrow
- 21 -- Nick Zorio Sr.
- 23 -- Kay Pierson
- 24 -- Dave Koehler
- 25 -- Amy Peterson
- 26 -- Linda Kershaw
- 27 -- Bill Sharp
- 29 -- Judy Milio
- 29 -- Robinson Guerra

Anniversary

- 29 -- John and Denise Pitchford



Mission committee makes 2016 plans to help others

Our last Cathedral Kitchen visit of the year is scheduled for Dec. 30. If you would like to help out, please contact Mary Kay Reynolds.

Thanks to all who have participated this year. Our dates to help at Cathedral Kitchen in 2016 are: Feb. 26, April 29, June 30, Aug. 30, Oct. 31 and Dec. 29.

We are hoping to help out with Family Promise at the First Presbyterian Church in Pitman sometime this winter.

Arrangements will soon be made for the new local director, Victoria Peters, to speak to our congregation about this worthwhile mission.

We're excited about donating to Hope Thrift, which recently opened in Brooklawn. Clothes, household items, furniture and many other items are needed. This store benefits a worthwhile ministry called Seeds of Hope.

You can learn more about it by going to their website at seedsofhopeministries.org.

All profits from Hope Thrift go toward helping needy people in South Jersey.

Finally, grants are being allocated by the West Jersey Presbytery for local mission projects. They are one time matching grants of \$1,000 each. If you have a project in mind, let us know!



DEACONS CORNER: Next meeting – 7 p.m., January 26, annex

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!:

Thank you to everyone who helped decorate our sanctuary in preparation for the Lord's birthday. We hope you will consider helping the deacons "undecorate" the sanctuary after the holidays, on Jan. 3.

Current News:

- **Christmas Tree Tags:** Please take a tag off the Narthex Christmas Tree and purchase that gift for one of our community family members to help them celebrate Christmas. Please place your name, phone number and tag number on the master sheet. *Gifts must be wrapped with this tag attached and placed in the box no later than Dec. 13!*
- **Fruit Baskets for Thanksgiving:** Thirteen fruit baskets were purchased and delivered to our church folks who lost loved ones this year and to our members who cannot make it out to Sunday service.
- **Thanksgiving gifts:** Nine families in the community, and from our church, received \$50 ShopRite gift cards to assist them in purchasing food for their Thanksgiving meals.
- **Visitation:** Eighty-four visits were made in October and 64 more were made in November. Deacons deliver flowers from the altar to special members, folks in nursing homes or in hospitals. Please give to the flower fund! See Erin Zorio to help purchase flowers and dedicate them in a loved one's name.
- **Communion:** The next communion is Jan. 3 ... to ring in the New Year!
- **Greeting cards:** Fifty-three cards were sent in November, a strong follow-up to the 45 that were sent in October. ... Liz and Kayleigh faithfully send greeting cards to members for birthdays, anniversaries, births, in sympathy and to help them get well. Please inform the deacons of your special dates so we can send you a card. Barrie Dawson and Liz are updating our birthday and anniversary lists.
- **Food collection:** We collected 114 items in November, bringing us to 930 for the year. Please help us to accumulate over 1,000 items for the year. Thank you!
- **Food items for December:** Peanut butter and jelly ... which is only a suggestion. All nonperishable food contributions are welcomed.
- **Prayer requests:** Rev. Shedwick initiates prayer requests and informs Joyce Woodrow to send mass emails and informs Kathy Pedicone who makes phone calls to folks who do not have email. If you are not getting a call or an email, please inform the church office.

Upcoming Events:

Dec. 13 – A NEW Christmas Pageant, 6 p.m.

Dec. 13 – Deadline for Christmas tag items bought for the needy

Jan 3, 2016 – Worship and communion ... and help undecorate afterward!

Ongoing events/programs:

- **Photo directories** are in the pew racks. Enjoy them but don't remove them.
- **Being Green:** Help recycle Sunday bulletins by placing them in the basket in the Narthex after worship.
- **Children's items:** Reusable doodle pads, toys and books for service are available in the Narthex.
- **Gift cards** for the ShopRite and Acme food markets. See Joyce Woodrow to buy them.
- **Food collection:** Thank you for helping us to continue this ministry!
- **Hospitality bags:** Donations can **stop** until further notice

Please continue placing your donations in the green offering envelopes!
And most importantly: Please inform us of anyone needing assistance or a visit.

God Bless - In Christ's service, Your Board of Deacons:

Liz Billings, Jeff Brenner, Clay Cary, Cassandra DeFinizio, Kim DiNoia, Steve Elliott, Connie Harley, Judy Milio, John Pedicone, Kayleigh Reim, Andrew Reynolds, Margaret Schneeman, Dottie Shedwick, Sydney Sheehan, Joe Williamson, Joyce Woodrow, moderator



DECEMBER 2015

'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.'

John 3:16

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Esther Circle, Sherry Outten's home, 7 p.m.	2	3 Bell choir, 6:45 p.m. Choir, 7:45	4	5
6 Sunday school celebrates advent, 9:30 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m. Speakers practice for pageant, 12:15 p.m.	7	8	9	10 Bell choir, 6:45 p.m. Choir, 7:45	11	12 Pageant rehearsal, 9 a.m.
13 Sunday school, 9:30 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m. Pageant, 6 p.m.	14 Prime Timers luncheon, Terra Nova, noon	15	16 Mission, 6:30 p.m. Session, 7 p.m.	17 Bell choir, 6:45 p.m. Choir, 7:45	18	19
20 Sunday school, 9:30 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m.	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve services, 7 and 11 p.m.	25 Merry Christmas!	26
27 Worship, 11 a.m.	28	29	30	31		



JANUARY 2016

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.'

2 Corinthians 5:17

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 HAPPY NEW YEAR	2
3 Sunday school, 9:30 a.m. Worship, communion 11 a.m.	4	5 Esther Circle at Ada White's home, 7 p.m.	6	7 Bell choir, 6:45 p.m. Choir, 7:45	8	9 Men's group, 8:30 a.m.
10 Sunday school, 9:30 a.m. Worship, Installation of officers, 11 a.m.	11 Prime Timers, noon	12	13	14 Bell choir, 6:45 p.m. Choir, 7:45	15	16
17 Sunday school, 9:30 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m.	18	19	20 Mission, 6:30 p.m. Session, 7 p.m.	21 Bell choir, 6:45 p.m. No choir	22	23
24 Sunday school, choir practice, 9:30 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m.	25	26 Deacons meet, 7 p.m.	27	28 Bell choir, 6:45 p.m. Choir, 7:45 p.m.	29	30
31 Sunday school, 9:30 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m. Community hymn sing, 3 p.m.						

News and notes from the November meeting of Session

Pastor's report: Rev. Shedwick, who leads two services on Christmas Eve, requested and was approved for a vacation from Dec. 27 to 31. We will have a guest pastor on Sunday, Dec. 27. ... Rev. Shedwick reported that he made 16 home and five hospital visits in October. He also offered 10 home communions and had one counseling session and one funeral. His mileage total for the month was 438. ... The head ushers for December will be Jake Mangano (Dec. 6), Brad Gilmore (Dec. 13), Sue Golding (Dec. 20), Dick Love (Dec. 24, 7 p.m.) and Barrie Dawson (Dec. 24, 11 p.m.) and Wendy Morrell (Dec. 27). ... Plans to update the church bylaws are being made.

Building and Property: The commission plans to trade in our snow blower for another one because the one we have does not fit easily through the shed door. ... Plans are being made to move the hot water heater that was recently replaced in the manse to Fellowship Hall to provide more hot water for cleanup after church luncheons and dinners. ... Solar City was not able to provide an estimate of heating costs for the sanctuary for technical reasons, but it did provide figures for heating the annex, and the saving would be significant. The commission is continuing to explore the idea of installing solar panels.

Christian Education: The Sunday School plans to celebrate Advent by making ornaments for a Jesse tree, which will be placed near the baptismal font. The children will also make cupcakes. ... Now that we have an enlarged Narthex, the deacons plan to put their Christmas tree there this year. ... Session members are being asked to help the church update its policies on sexual abuse. A template is provided by the Presbyterian Church, but each congregation must modify it to fit its own needs. Ours hasn't been updated in 20 years. Our church is again discussing having background checks done on those who work with our youth.

Stewardship and Finance: The church is steadily climbing out of the financial shortfall it was in early this fall. Giving has improved in the last month, but the sale of stocks and the need to dip into reserve funds have greatly reduced our financial cushion. We have reason to believe some financial relief will be coming our way in 2016.

Communication and Outreach: The commission has reinstated the church's presence on Facebook, but is working to make it easier for outsiders to access our information. ... The panel has attempted to create a new communication line between the congregation and Session, but no one has taken advantage of it so far. With that in mind, the idea of placing a suggestion box in the Narthex has been scrapped. ... C&O entertained the idea of buying display-ad space in the South Jersey Times for the church but decided the return was unlikely to justify the expenditure. ... The commission is also working with deacon representatives to update the church directory and consolidate its birthday and anniversary lists.

Fellowship: Look for Dinner for Six signup sheets to be distributed soon. Organizer Karen Bagnell says the dates are likely to be in January, March and May.

West Jersey Presbytery: Dave Kershaw, Rev. Shedwick, Richard Daugherty and Barrie Dawson all represented our church at the Nov. 17 meeting in Absecon. ... Dave Kershaw was approved as one of the presbytery's commissioners for the 222nd General Assembly gathering in Portland, Ore., next June. ... June will be a big month for Dave because he will be installed as moderator of the WJP when it meets at our church on June 28. ... The Presbytery approved a request by the Barrington congregation to dissolve and closed the book on the Delanco church, which held its last service in December 2014. ... Longtime pastor Kate Killebrew of the Collingswood Presbyterian Church has accepted a leadership position with the Synod of Lakes and Prairies in Saint Paul, Minn. ... The WJP will keep per capita at \$38.75 per member in 2016 and make up the shortfall from its own funds. ... The WJP Disaster Assistance Committee is offering to visit and help member churches create disaster-preparedness plans free of charge.



Notes from the Organ Bench

December-January 2015-16

by
Quint Lerch



“A Garland of Carols” Christmas pageant, 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13

For this year’s annual Advent celebration, we are proud to present a totally new Christmas pageant, *A Garland of Christmas Carols*. Naturally it will feature the same characters you find in any pageant as you really can’t change Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, the shepherds and the three kings. The change this year comes in the music and who presents it. All of our choirs are participating, with the Sanctuary and Youth choirs presenting most of the music, aided by the Cherub and Nursery choirs. The congregation will also provide some of the singing in each of the five musical suites. Most of the carols are familiar and loved by all. So, to help get you into the season of Advent and Christmas, join us on an almost-winter evening of story, scripture and song. Come for all of that and also to support our choirs and music program. And, at the end of the evening, you can top it off with a piece of cake and some Christmas punch. See you there.

The spaghetti dinner – thanks for your support

It was a perfect November evening. The weather was crisp but not too cold and even the Eagles cooperated by not playing. More than 100 eager eaters gathered in Fellowship Hall for a delicious and memorable night of great food cooked to perfection by Brad Gilmore and his helpers. If anyone left hungry it was their fault as there was an abundance of food, topped off by delicious desserts, prepared by Sanctuary and Bell Choir members. But most importantly, those people gathered were there to support our music program and choirs. Thanks for coming out!

“A Garland of Carols” Christmas Pageant

**First Presbyterian Church
of Woodbury Heights**

6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13

**Reception to follow in
Fellowship Hall**

Snow Date – Jan. 3, 2016



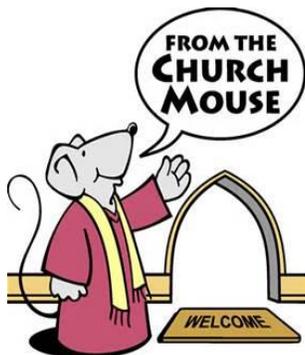
Important Dates

**Pageant Speakers
Rehearsal** - 12:15 to
1:30 p.m. Dec. 6 with
lunch provided.

**Pageant Dress
Rehearsal for All
Participants** – 9 a.m.
to noon Dec. 12

**“A Garland of Carols”
Christmas Pageant** –
6 p.m. Dec. 13.
Dessert reception to
follow

**Christmas Eve
worship:** 7 and 11
p.m. services, featuring
our choirs.



Since 1999, when our congregation began to plan for the 100th anniversary celebration of our church, members have been in search of historical materials. Several small pieces of paper were found in the corners, rafters and under boxes in the main church building and the Annex. Upon closer inspection, each seemed to be covered with small scratchings. These items were collected and set aside for investigation at some later time. It can now be revealed that these scratchings are diary entries by "A. Church Mouse." We will be publishing these tidbits for the next several months.

Your History Committee

The choirs work hard on a winter's night

Jan. 8, 2014

Dear Diary,

We love Thursday night and the choir rehearsals, but it's rainy and cold! Mrs. String was sure happy to feel how warm the church was when she came in. Her bell choirs can't practice with cold hands!

It looks like all her ringers have made it through the storm! I'm tired from my long day. How tired they all must be! How can they be so dedicated? Do they really like to leave their homes and families every Thursday night to come and work some more!

Here comes Mr. Lerch. Oh, look, someone changed the decorations on the doors. Nice! I noticed a Deacon was here going through the pews earlier and has everything in the hymn racks nice and neat. The children will have enough scratch paper to draw on this Sunday. We have lots of quiet little artists.

The bells are almost finished rehearsing. Look how fat those sanctuary choir folders are tonight! That looks like a lot of new music. I can't wait. OK, here we go. Mr. Lerch reminds everyone that there are many friends needing prayers. This may take awhile.

I stopped writing until after prayer. It was a good one tonight, Quint.

Now, let's see if they can finally get the timing right on Sunday's anthem. Maybe they can finish early, and I can have some cocoa before bed. Oh, oh! Mr. Lerch wants to learn several of the new anthems.

Mike just said something and everybody laughed. This church is the best! It has so many who work to glorify God. I am sure John and the congregation will rejoice when they hear the choir sing on Sunday.

A. C. Mouse

Hooray for Hollywood!

On Nov. 9, 17 Prime Timers returned to a favored local establishment for a lunch and their meeting.

It was a lovely day, and good that so many were present. We had much to discuss!

Margaret Schneeman caused some excitement with her news about a new puppy and asked that we offer suggestions for names.

Judy Milio then took the floor and told us about the Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival at St. Peter's Church in Lafayette Hills, Pa. We will attend this beautiful celebration Jan. 9. Fifteen of us will take this trip, and we will rent a mini-van.

Our moderator, Paul Milio, called the meeting to order.

We discussed our delayed visit to the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in Philadelphia – a trip we'll take this spring.

After many comments, we finalized our three choices of entrees for our Christmas luncheon. Ginny Naylor collected the money and each person's choice. We will enjoy fresh bread, salad, a starch, vegetables and the choice of veal parmigiana, crab-stuffed tilapia or braised short ribs. And of course we'll have dessert!

The last item on the agenda was the election of new officers. Paul Milio declined the opportunity to serve another year. Ada White graciously accepted the nomination. She will be our moderator beginning with the February meeting. Paul Milio has agreed to serve as vice-moderator. Esther Culbert was elected "in absentia" as our secretary, and Ginny Naylor remains our treasurer.