

COMMUNITY CALL

Ministers: The People of God; Pastor: Rev. D. Matthew Stith
702 Sheyenne St., P.O. 546, West Fargo, ND 58078 701-282-4135 E-mail: office@cpcwf.org Web: http://cpcwf.org

DECEMBER PROGRAMS

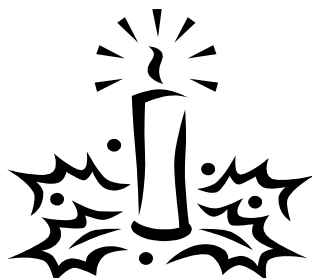
Once again, in addition to regular worship services, Community Presbyterian Church offers you many special ways to celebrate the Lord's birth throughout the month of December.

The first event is the Christmas Cantata on Sunday, December 10, at 4:00 p.m. The choir will be performing Rejoice!, a handpicked collection of lessons and carols set to honor and tell the story of Jesus' birth. Junior and Senior Choir, Men's Chorus, Women's Chorus, as well as the Handbell Choir will be featured in this retelling of the Christmas story. Join us for a potluck meal in the fellowship hall afterwards.

Next, you won't want to miss the Sunday School Christmas program, Angels Aware, to be presented on Sunday, December 18, at 3:00 p.m. Bring your favorite treats to share following the presentation.

Finally, you'll want to join us for the Christmas eve service on Sunday, December 24, at 6:00 p.m. and the Christmas service on Monday, December 25, at 10:00 a.m.

Merry Christmas!



PASTOR'S PEN

Well, as I write this, Advent is nearly upon us, and that should mean the beginning of the Christmas music season at the Stith house. As usual, this year I firmly resolved to fight back, in my own small way, against the commerce-driven phenomenon of "Christmas Creep"—the tendency to start the Christmas season earlier and earlier each year—by refraining from listening to seasonal music until Advent. And, as usual, this year I couldn't help myself but start early. It seems like there's always some



(Continued on page 2)

In this issue

	<u>Page</u>
Annual Reports Please	5
Calendar	9
Clerk's Corner	3
Cookie and Candy Sale	7
December Dates	5
Fall Bazaars	6
Giving Tree	7
Mission Project	7
Project Open Door Report	8
Quilting News	6
Secret Angels Revealed	7
Soul Train Schedules	5
Sunday School Angels	4
Sunday School Schedule	5

(Continued from page 1)

Christmas album or song that I just can't help myself but break out early.

This year, there are two culprits. The first is a recording of medieval Hungarian Christmas music by the vocal ensemble Anonymous 4. My excuse on this one is that the sheer loveliness of the sounds, along with the fact that I don't really understand any of the Latin words anyway, makes this more of a "year-round" album than a true Christmas one. Anyway, that's my story.

The second album for which I broke my curfew this year, though, offers no such excuse. This year brought a new Christmas collection from Neal & Leandra, a husband-and-wife duo from the Twin Cities area whose previous Christmas effort has been my very favorite of the past few years. One of Neal's original songs, in particular, from the new album has absolutely captivated me, and is already shaping my reflections on Christmas in some pretty significant ways.

The song is called "Fool," and it is written as the words of a poor, tired sinner to God in response to the birth of the Christ child. The singer voices his disbelief that God would choose a fragile, tiny baby as the vehicle to face the innumerable, irresolvable problems of the world and its people. He also expresses his doubt that such a divine intervention as the Incarnation is even sane, let alone wise. Here's the first refrain:

*You're a fool, you're a fool;
to say there is room at the inn
for people like us.
And if you would think twice,
you'd realize
this world wants none of your love!*



Later on, the lyrics to the refrain shift subtly from the universal to the individual:

*You're a fool, you're a fool;
to say there is room at the inn
for somebody like me.
And if you would think twice,
you'd realize-
you're wasting your love,
can't you see?*

Neal's ragged voice and the spare instrumentation of the song drive the message home even more forcefully, but even these snatches of the words ought to make the point: The Incarnation—God's coming to Earth as a human baby—that we celebrate at Christmas is, not to put too fine a point on it, crazy. It makes no sense, by any standard we can comprehend, for God to love us in such a personal and costly way as to make himself one of us. Anyone who would give so fully and deeply of themselves for a bunch of people whose every action argues that they not only don't deserve the gift, but don't even want it. Any way we look at it, it does look like God, in that Bethlehem manger, was wasting his love on a world that, based on how we act most of the time, doesn't seem to want it—or at least doesn't want it expressed in this way.

Of course, God is not a fool—or at least if he is, his foolishness is wiser than our wisdom, as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:25, and the scandalous, foolish gift of the Incarnation is the one and only thing that the world, and its people, and each one of us poor, tired sinners needs. Thank God he was foolish enough to know it. Merry Christmas.



CLERK'S CORNER

The Session met on Wednesday, November 15, 2006.

The financial report and the minutes of the October meeting were approved. Andrew Thostenson reported that it was not necessary to withdraw any money from the PCUSA loan during November. They will withdraw money during December and January. This will mean less interest to be paid this month. The Session agreed that usage of the new facilities will be decided by the Session and that those persons or groups with suggestions or requests to use space should make a written request to the Session.

The insurance policy for the church building was discussed, and the trustees recommended that the policy from Continental be approved for the current building and that when the new facilities are accepted, a new policy will be written. The Session agreed.

A request from Jan Roesler Sowers to transfer to the United Methodist Church of Cody, Wyoming was approved.

The Session also approved a request from the PW to hold their annual Cookie and Candy Sale on December 10th and 17th.

Three new members were received conditionally into church membership. Linda Bishop, Chris and Ronda Green will complete their membership requirements with Reaffirmation of Faith at a future worship service because they are not now members of another church. The Greens have 4 children: Christopher (5) Michael (3) Erin (2) and Alexander (11 months). The older boys have been baptized, but Erin and Alexander will be baptized at a date agreed upon by the Greens, the Session and Pastor Stith.

Please welcome these new members into the church. You will recognize the Greens with the 4 little red-haired children. They normally sit on the north side of the sanctuary.

The Christian Education Committee was given permission to join the Our Family Labels for Learning Program with Sun Mart Foods. They will announce the details later.

The Quilters were given permission to construct quilt squares honoring service personnel. Members are asked to give information about service personnel to Carol Sterup. The squares will be hung in the new narthex and when the personnel are separated from the service, the squares will be given to them. Hopefully this will remind people to pray for our service people.

The Congregational Care Committee will be assembling and delivering fruit baskets to our shut-ins and to salaried personnel. If you know of someone who is shut-in and would like a basket, please let Jim Johnson or Vickie Peihl know. Money for this project will come from the deacons fund.

Sandra Keller, bookkeeper and office help, has resigned her position as of November 17. Ads have been placed in local papers and several inquires have been received. The Personnel Committee hopes to be able to hire someone shortly. In the meantime, Cheryl Montgomery will handle the accounting duties, and Delores Horn will help with the secretarial work.

The Christian Education Committee will talk with Curt Brophy, youth director, in regard to the information given him when he was hired concerning changing his hours and compensation. The Christian Education Committee will make a

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

recommendation to the Personnel Committee and Pastor Stith, who in turn will make a recommendation to the Session.

Jim Johnson reported that several visits have been made to shut-ins and ill church members. Also, they have talked with people about transportation to the church. Anyone knowing persons who are shut-in, ill, or need transportation should let Jim know.

Dixon Moorhead has made plans to take several persons from the High Rise to the Christmas Concert at Concordia. The Mission Committee will be using \$150 of their budget to pay for tickets and transportation.

The Stewardship Committee distributed copies of a draft of the budget planned for next year. They also distributed a draft of a letter and pledge form that will be sent to members to indicate how they will contribute to the mission of the church for 2007.

The Christmas Eve Service has been changed from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. to allow some of the persons serving dinner at the Salvation Army to attend.

Pastor Stith reported that the Rainbow Shop is going to provide coupons for members and friends to use to purchase items at that store for 20% off. The church will receive either \$1 per coupon redeemed or \$1.50 in product credits. These will be available shortly, probably in the Sunday bulletin or from the church office.

The Fall PW Bazaar realized \$1,800 in profits to be used for their projects such as scholarships for youth to attend Bible camp next summer (\$1,300 was given to 13 youth in 2006.). The Moorhead Center Mall realized \$566.15 for Project

Open Door. Tickets were also sold for the Christmas Quilt Drawing to be held on December 17th during the potluck.

Cookbooks were also sold at both bazaars. Over 300 cookbooks have been sold; about 50 more need to be sold in order to cover printing costs. Following costs, proceeds from these sales will go to Project Open Door.

137 persons were served communion on November 5.

Delores Horn, Clerk of Session

VALENTINE DINNER NEWS

Keep your calendars open for Friday, February 9th when Andrew and Janine Steele will once again be presenting us with a scrumptious Valentine Dinner. More news will follow in upcoming bulletins and the next Community Call.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ANGELS

The Christmas program, Angels Aware, will be presented by the children's Sunday School on Sunday, December 17th, at 3:00 p.m., followed by shared cookies and coffee.



The practice schedule for the little "angels" are as follows:

Sat., Dec. 2 at 9:00 a.m.—kids with speaking parts

Sat., Dec. 9 at 12:45 p.m.—*all* kids

Sat., Dec. 16th at 12:45 p.m.—*all* kids

POINSETTIAS PLEASE

We will be decorating the sanctuary with artificial poinsettias for Christmas this year. If you have one which you would like to share with the church, please put it in the kitchen with your name on the bottom.

**DECEMBER DATES
TO REMEMBER**

BIRTHDAYS

- 12-2 Amber Swart
- 12-4 Jaden Steele
- 12-5 Terry Meester
Maggie Traylor
- 12-6 Jacob Faircloth
Jessica Nelson
Kailyn Ohm
- 12-8 Casey Larson
- 12-9 Brandi Vistad
- 12-10 Brady Bahls
Richard Pyle
- 12-11 Madison Kellerman
- 12-13 Brooke Pederson
Bo Sheeley
- 12-15 Anneus Meester
- 12-18 Janine Steele
- 12-19 Nich Leopold
- 12-21 Gail Sheeley
- 12-23 Erin Thostenson
- 12-25 Ray Christopherson
- 12-26 Boots Montgomery
- 12-28 Gary Duggan
Chad Nelson
- 12-31 Sophia Dobrinz



ANNIVERSARIES

- 12-12-70 – Jack and Dixie Smith
- 12-16-89 - Richard and Faye Pyle
- 12-18-82 – Andrew and Gayle
Thostenson
- 12-19-86 – Ron and Kathy LaCoe
- 12-27-80 - Chuck and Sarah Traylor

**2006-2007
SUNDAY SCHOOL
SCHEDULE**



- Dec. 24 Christmas-
No Sunday School
- Dec. 31 New Year's Eve-
No Sunday School
- Jan. 28 Memorization Sunday
- Mar. 4 Memorization Sunday
- April 8 Easter-No Sunday School
- May 13 Memorization Sunday
- May 20 Last Day of Sunday School

**SOUL TRAIN
SCHEDULES:
MIDDLE SCHOOL**



- Dec. 3 6:30-8:30 presents for shut-ins
- Dec. 10 No meeting because of no school on Monday
- Dec. 17 Progressive Dinner – details TBA

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!! Our next meeting will be on Sunday, January 21st.

HIGH SCHOOL

- Dec. 3 TBA
- 10 No meeting, no school on Monday
- 17 Progressive Dinner – details TBA

**CHRISTMAS
QUILT RAFFLE**



Tickets are now on sale for chances to win a Christmas quilt, carefully stitched by CPC's Quilters. The drawing for this beautiful quilt will be on Sunday, December 17th, following the worship service.

This is the one and only annual fundraiser used by the Quilters. All monies collected will go to fund their many, many projects which include wedding quilts, mission quilts, prayer, quilts, and military blocks.

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2006

It is time for committee chairs and group leaders to begin thinking about the reports that are needed for the annual meeting in January. I would like to have all reports in by January 15 so that it will be possible to have the report in the hands of the congregation a week before the meeting. These reports should reflect the activities of the committees and groups for the year of 2006.
Delores Horn, Clerk of Session



THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

Marty and Debbie Matzke very generously donated their crop of pumpkins to Soul Train this year. Soul Train kids and parents sold pumpkins at the farm and in the church parking lot for one weekend. We made \$479.10 (10 cents?) to use for various projects throughout the year. Thank you to everyone who bought a pumpkin and a very special hug and thank you to the Matzkes!

BASKETBALL CHALLENGE MET



The Basketball Challenge on the evening of Sunday, October 29th was met and answered! We had 26 kids and five adults all competing with extremely high levels of basketball skill. We played Lightning with the grand champion being Jordan Birrenkott - "Congratulations." (Mary DeJong was a close second.) The big challenge of the night was the PIG Tournament. Each group picked their best players and met in a head-to-head competition. The high school came in third - "Nice job high school." The middle school came in second - "Way to go middle school." The adults came in FIRST - WAHOO!!!!!!!!!!!! See you next year!

PRAYER QUILTS

The quilters have been very busy working on Prayer Quilts. Soon they will make quilt kits, using simple patterns, so people can sew at home.



A big THANK YOU goes out to Stitch It Quilts and The Lady Bug Quilt Shop for donating several yards of beautiful fabric for this project.

Anyone with sewing abilities that would like more information contact Carol Sterup at 293-6603.

BAZAAR REPORTS



\$1,800 was realized at the PW Bazaar held on October 28th. These funds will go to pay for summer camp scholarships.

As usual the Baked Potato Luncheon was a big success (Thanks to Chuck Thompson for providing the potatoes.). We were very glad that we did not have the White Elephant Sale as space was limited due to the construction.

\$566.15 was realized at the Moorhead Center Mall Church Bazaar. Proceeds from this venture will go to Project Open Door.

We want to thank everyone who contributed items and also those who purchased them.

OFFERING BOXES



The 2007 Offering Boxes will be available sometime in December. If you don't find one for yourself or your family, please let Delores Horn know. The Sunday School youth will get their boxes in their classes.

MILITARY QUILT BLOCK

Recently during, 'Joys and Concerns', Matt asked that anyone with a family member or friend serving in the military to raise their hands, so we could pray for them. It was very moving to see so many hands raised.

The quilters are making 6 inch, individual, quilt blocks and are writing the names of those serving our country in the center of the squares.

The small blocks will hang in the new narthex. Please contact Carol Sterup if you would like a military block made. Please include the name and rank for whom you would like the square made and his/her category and location of service, example: SSgt Seth Whitcomb, Special Forces, Germany.



CHURCH INFORMATION BULLETIN BOARD

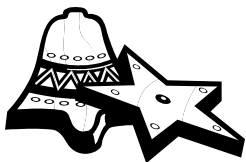
The Church Bulletin Board in the narthex is in need of updating. If you know of data that has changed or something or someone that is missing, please leave a message in the church office. We try to get all current information up there, but unless someone lets us know information, we cannot include it.

HO-HO-HO! THE GIVING TREE IS HERE!



It is time to be Santa for the special children in our community. Our church is full of the Christmas spirit, and now it is time to spread that spirit into the hearts of children. Please remove an ornament from the tree and return it with an unwrapped present by Sunday, December 17th.

This year our giving tree will be set up downstairs on a bulletin board. The presents can be placed in the tote in narthex. Ho(ly)-Ho(ly)-Ho(ly)!!!



COOKIE & CANDY SALE

The PW will be holding their annual Cookie & Candy Sale on December 10th and December 17th in the narthex.

Please bring all items to be sold packaged. If you want to price them, please do so. Otherwise the ladies in charge will price them according to the prices used at the bazaar.

Indulge your sweet tooth by buying some of these goodies. They make nice gifts for teachers and others to whom you wish to give a small gift.

SECRET ANGELS REVEALED



You may think you know who your Secret Angel is, but you won't know for certain until....

Date: January 8th, 2007

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Carol Sterup's Home
634 18th Ave., E
West Fargo
293-6603

Remember to bring your final small gift and keep it hidden until the Big Reveal!

UPDATE ON MISSIONS

As I write this, I see the blue tote is just about overflowing with thermal underwear, socks, mittens, and hats for the New Life Center—What wonderful gifts for the men there! Also, the October money taken in for Youth for Christ came to 317 dollars. That's sixty-seven dollars over our set goal! Thanks so much for your continued support of our monthly missions!

NEW LIFE CENTER LUNCHEON



On Friday, January 19th, our church is scheduled to serve lunch at the New Life Center at noon. We will provide and serve the meal.

We will need help to set up the tables at 11:00 a.m. along with help to serve the meal. Also, we will need pans of bars for dessert. If you can help, please contact Gloria Ruhnke (282-2636), Ardis Sherwood (282-7994), or Delores Horn (282-4501).

PROJECT OPEN DOOR UPDATE



What a difference a month makes!

God provided us with excellent weather in November so all the temperature critical exterior issues have been completed (asphalt paving, painting, brick work, and roofing trim). Plus, as an added bonus, Chuck Thompson was able to stripe the east parking lot! For the most part, the work on the exterior is complete; they even set the date stone a couple of days before Thanksgiving.

The interior work has kicked into high gear as well. At the time of this writing, the basement is nearing completion with only the carpets needing to be installed. On the foyer level, sheet rock needs to be taped and painted and then fixtures and carpet will follow. On the narthex level, ceiling tiles, fixtures, book cases, the coffee bar, and carpets need to go in, but on the other hand the toilet fixtures are functional as is the elevator. As for the elevator, only the controllers need to be put in place, but the hardware, electrical, and the hydraulics are good to go. The fire suppression system should be in place throughout the church in the next week or so.

The big question is when will it be finished? That depends. Our prayer is that our contractors will turn the building over for inspection by us and the City of West Fargo the second half of December. Once the City approves it as substantially complete, we can occupy it. Then, before we can actually use it, we will need to dedicate the structure. Finally, our contractors will still be doing some small work as we deem necessary well into January. When we are satisfied that they have fulfilled their obligations, we will pay the remaining 5% on our contracts and call it good.

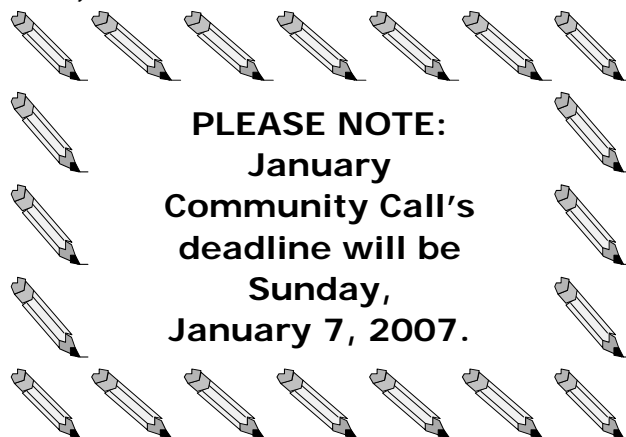
Financially, we were surprised at the billings due November 15th. We were actually billed for about \$38,000. (We thought it would be at least six figures.) The good news was that we were able to meet our obligations without having to draw from our PCUSA loan. This will save us interest expense and allow us to go back to the PCUSA in December and January. This would not have been possible if it we were not blessed with timely gifts and pledges being faithfully redeemed. Our prayer from here on out should be to keep cost overruns contained and gifts to be generously made, especially in December and January.

As we near the end of POD construction, it is time to look ahead towards figuring out the best way to use this structure for God's glory. Therefore, pray earnestly for wisdom and discernment.

GIFTS YOU CAN USE



When buying gifts for loved ones this Christmas, don't forget to share our new Community Presbyterian Church cookbook. Not only will you be giving a precious gift, but you'll be benefiting Project Open Door. The books are twelve dollars each; after one buys five or more, the cookbooks are ten dollars each. Cookbooks are available for sale after worship or contact Marlys Martin (282-3740) or Carol Duggan (282-4887).



PLEASE NOTE:
January
Community Call's
deadline will be
Sunday,
January 7, 2007.