

COMMUNITY CALL

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On Christmas And Its Meaning

In a song made popular a few years ago, singer songwriter Joan Osborne posed the question **"What If God Were One Of Us?"**. Making use of that license which pertains to poets she asks, *"What if God were one us, Just a slob like one of us, Just a stranger on the bus, trying to find his way home"*. Joan Osborne (and I suspect she speaks for many) cries out for a connection between God and the ambiguous lives most of us actually live.

Christmas, and the act of God which the holiday commemorates, provides an answer to the old question which Joan Osborne has articulated in a new way, "What If God Were One Of Us". That answer is that "God **IS** one of us". This is what we mean when we speak of the incarnation. We mean that the eternal God, has become one with us in Jesus Christ. What if God were one of us? What if God walked the dusty streets of slums? What if God had to ride a bus or otherwise deal with the mundane realities of lives like ours? What if we really were not alone in the ordinariness of daily life? What if God were with us just as the person at the next desk or at the next work station is?

The message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is precisely that God is one of us. That the incarnate God walked among us and shared our joys and sorrows, ate bread such as we eat, was anxious, cold and hungry and subject to the indignities of being human and ul-

timately died as we die. God is with us not only in our lofty spirituality, God is with us in the plight of a homeless infant, the ostracism of the leper and the social outcast, the room of the sick and at the door of the tomb. God in Christ dealt intimately and personally with all the exigencies of the human condition.

There is a sense of loneliness and dereliction in Joan Osborne's song. But the sad longing is accompanied by an admixture of hope and in the Gospel of Christ that hope is not disappointed nor does it make ashamed the one who would depend upon it.

There was another song on the same subject but it was sung long ago. It has turned from
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the question and focused on God's answer,
the incarnate Christ of Christmas:

*"Then Mary said:
My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.*

*For behold,
henceforth all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.*

*And his mercy is on those who fear him
from generation to generation.*

*He has shown strength with his arm,
he has scattered the proud
in the imagination of their hearts,
he has put down the mighty from their thrones,
and exalted those of low degree;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.*

*He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his posterity forever."*

(Luke 1:46- 55)

Giving Tree

The Giving Tree will be up in the Sanctuary from Dec. 2-16. Please take a gift ornament off the tree and return an unwrapped gift in its place. Giving cheer and happiness to a child's Christmas will bring more cheer and happiness to yours. The presents will be taken to the Holiday Clearing Bureau.

Sunday School Schedule

- Dec. 2 –Hanging of the green
during worship service
5th through 8th graders are needed
- Dec. 8 -Christmas program practice
1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
- Dec. 9 -Christmas program practice
during Sunday School
- Dec. 15-Christmas program practice
1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
- Dec. 16-Christmas program dress rehearsal
during Sunday School
-Christmas program 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School mural presentation
- Dec. 23/30–Christmas Break
No Sunday School
- Jan. 6 –Sunday School resumes
- Jan. 13-Sunday School attendance awards
during worship service
- Jan. 20-Third grade Bibles will be presented
during worship service



Youth News

On Saturday, December 15th, from 9 am to 12 pm, there will be a self-defense seminar for youth (jr. high and up) and adults. This class will cover basic skills that one needs if one is attacked. Cost is \$15 per person; \$20 off the regular rate. If you would like to participate, please sign up in the narthex beginning the first week in December. Participants need to complete a release form and turn it in to me before the seminar. Participants should wear sweatpants and t-shirts for the training. Please call me with any questions you may have about this exciting event. We need at least 15 participants to make this work, so please sign up early.

Thank you & God bless,
Jessica Crane
218-730-5293

Video Library

Have you checked out our video library recently? Our newest selections are:

- The Prince of Egypt
- Jesus
- Veggie tales:
 - Rack, Shack & Benny
 - Larry Boy & The Fib from Outer Space
 - God Wants Me to Forgive Them?!?

Please consider contributing new and used videos to our video library collection. See the list of suggested videos in the Narthex. HAPPY VIEWING!!

Thank you

Thank you so much to every one of you for your cards, visits, prayers, gifts. The many concerns of everyone for my health were much appreciated.

I'm so thankful for my family, my church family, good doctors, good care and faith: for without Him, things wouldn't have gone so well.

Prayer makes a big difference, and everything went so well, better than expected. I have so much to be thankful for, and I count my many blessings.

I returned home November 24th. It is wonderful to be home! Everett is doing fine, and I think the change of my being there added a little variety to his daily routine.

Thanks again, I hope you all had a good Thanksgiving.

Goodie Paulsen



Annual PW Christmas Bake Sale

The Presbyterian Women will be holding their annual Christmas Bake Sale on December 9th and 16th after church. We have had a very good response to this sale in the past and hope this year will be as good or better. As in the past we are asking the ladies (or men) of the church to bring baked goods, candy and other goodies to the church on those dates. We ask that, if possible, you have it packaged for sale.

Nursery News

The Presbyterian Women are planning to do some updating in the nursery. The carpet will be cleaned and the walls need to be painted.

There is a need for a changing table for the convenience of nursery workers and also to keep diapers, kleenex, and wet wipes organized. A playpen would also be useful.

Some different toys (new or used) for ages zero to three would be nice for the children. Toys could be dropped off at the nursery on any Sunday morning.

If you have any items to donate, call Brenda Bjorklund, Marlys Martin or leave a message at the church office.



Mitten Basket

Once again we will be having a mitten drive to help needy children in our community. Last year we took mittens to several schools in the West Fargo School District, and we will distribute them locally again. There will be a basket in the narthex to drop off the mittens. We hope to have it filled by the end of December as our winter weather is coming soon!

One Of Our Own Heads For Afghanistan

Seth Whitcomb has departed for duty in Afghanistan. If you wish to send him an encouraging note the military will see that he gets it. Seth's mailing address is:

Sgt. Seth Whitcomb
A-Company 37th Engineering Battalion
Box 221
Fort Bragg, NC 28310

Seth is a very dedicated and highly trained soldier. He recently completed "Ranger School".

Go with God, Seth. We are proud of you and will keep you in our prayers.

Church Scrapbook

I would like to gather pictures taken at past church functions. If you have any that you would like to have included, please give them to me. It would help if they were labeled with a year and event. I know pictures have been taken on ski trips, rafting trips, sleepovers, bowling, hayrides.... It would be nice to be able to look back through the many church activities. If someone has a skill with scrapbooking and has an interest in helping, please let me know.

Thanks,
Becky DeJong
281-8122

As The Year Ends At Community Presbyterian Church

As the year ends in our church community, we should take a moment to contemplate the accomplishments of the year gone by. It is important to do this because otherwise we might become discouraged by the annual year end financial struggles. This is the time of the year when we feel the pinch the most and it would be easy to forget what has gone right.

Property Improvements:

The Master Plan: We began the year by completing our Master Planning process. The Master Plan provides a road map to the future of our property. With it we will be able to proceed intelligently into the future.

Pew Cushions: Thanks to the initiative, organization and generosity of our membership, we now have attractive and comfortable cushions on our pews. This makes our sanctuary more welcoming to friends old and new.

Parking Expansion: We now have 26 new parking spaces.

We spent over \$31,000 this year to accomplish these three goals and we paid for them completely with giving dedicated to these purposes.

Mission And Program Initiatives:

Biblical Murals: The hallway of the Christian Education wing has been

lovingly decorated with attractive murals. A large number of our members have spent many hours on this project which has taken on a life of its own. They seem to be having a great time expressing their faith with their art. There are plans to develop these themes further in the classrooms. Thanks to all! Great Job!

Vacation Bible School: We ran a fun filled VBS program using the Veggie Tales materials.

Youth Activities: We had our usual ski trips and bowling activities. We began a new program called **The Etiquette Dinner**. In this program we brought in a consultant from the Academy Modeling Agency to instruct ladies and gentlemen of Junior and Senior High age in the art of gracious conduct in a formal setting. The event was well attended and much enjoyed. We are planning two events of this type for 2002. During the Summer, we ran a Junior/Senior High **White Water Raft Trip** and enjoyed the biggest water we have ever seen on the St. Louis River. (See the pictures on our Web Site www.cpcwf.org). We sent a sizable group of kids to the **Presbytery Camp** at Clearwater Forest.

Music: The benefits of having a Music Director have been slowly accruing in the musical program of the church. In addition to the work of the choir, It has been especially fun to see small groups of High School
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students enriching our worship with their own considerable talents. The choir will perform the Christmas Cantata, this Sunday, December, 9th. This will be Paul's final endeavor with us. He finds himself a little overextended with graduate work and several jobs. We will be looking for an able replacement in the early part of 2002.

Spiritual Growth: There are now two Bible study groups meeting in various homes. One is a mixed group and the second is a Women's study group. The men expect to begin an monthly or semi monthly luncheon very soon.

The Sunday School Program: The Sunday School program continues to be a center of enthusiasm and energy and they are promising us a real foot stomping western ho-down of a Christmas program on December 16th.

Increased Generosity To Mission: Special times call forth special graces. You have more than doubled your mission giving this year.

These are just a few of the things that are "going right" let's keep it up and expand our efforts in the year to come.

**V.I.P.S**

As we end this year, let's take a moment to welcome our newcomers and new members of 2001 and reaffirm our obligations to them:

BAPTISMS

Andrea Frances Corneliussen, daughter of Stephanie and Lee Corneliussen

Zarissa Kaylee Hansen, daughter of Melanie & Scott Hansen

Olivia Anne Dobrinz, daughter of Lee & Lia Dobrinz

Zaryn Parker Hansen, daughter of Melanie & Scott Hansen

Kenneth Leonell Willis, son of Tyson & Tina Willis

NEW MEMBERS

Jenna Barenthsen
 Ryan Bastle
 Kyle Kassman
 Chris Larson
 Elizabeth Meyer
 Lindsey Moe
 Austin Montgomery
 Gordon Pederson
 Judy Pederson
 Sonda Pederson
 Tom Pederson
 Shane Saari
 Cheryl Saari
 Doug Saari
 Jason Saari
 Keith Sebelius

December Dates to Remember

BIRTHDAYS

- 12-2 Amber Swart
- 12-4 Paul Barta
- 12-5 Terry Meester
- 12-6 Kailyn Ohm
- 12-8 Casey Larson
- 12-9 Arletta Geiss
- 12-10 Brady Bahls
- 12-11 Madison Kellerman
- 12-12 Jim Martens
- 12-13 Bo Sheeley
Brooke Bellamy
- 12-19 Mike Moe
- 12-21 Gail Sheeley
- 12-23 Erin Thostenson
- 12-25 Ray Christopherson
Todd Montgomery
- 12-26 Boots Montgomery
- 12-28 Gary Duggan
- 12-31 Shane Saari
- 12-31 Sophia Dobrinz

ANNIVERSARIES

- 12-12-70 – Jack and Dixie Smith
- 12-18-82 – Andrew and Gayle Thostenson
- 12-29-77 – Phil and Maryjane Martens

Sermons Online

Have you ever missed a Sunday and really wanted to hear what the preacher had to say? Or maybe you wish that you (or Aunt Mary) could hear a particular sermon again. Do not despair. Check out the church's website at www.cpcwf.org and click onto the sermons choice to the left. There you can listen to many of Pastor Tilly's sermons via Real Player. This program is available for free via the internet or the church's office.

Christmas Cantata

The adult choir will be performing a Christmas cantata as part of the worship service on the morning of December 9th. This year's singing celebration of Christ's birth is entitled Of the Father's Love Begotten by Gilbert M. Martin with narration by Stephen Andrews.

This performance will also mark the last appearance of Paul Barta as our church music director. Paul plans to use his extra time in pursuing a master's degree in music at NDSU, meeting his National Guard obligations, and having some quality time with his family. There will be cake and treats to share in his honor following Sunday's performance.



Sunday School Christmas Program

Y'all come on over to see the children's program during the 10:00 worship service on December 16th. This year's cantata, For Unto Y'all, is described as a retelling of Luke's classic story of the birth of the Son of God. Only this time, the place is the old West. But while the setting may change, the truth never will. Like old Gabriel puts it - "For unto y'all is born this day, right over yonder in the town of Bethlehem, a Savior who is Christ the Lord! And that, my friends, is the Truth - with or without the drawl!"

Don't forget to stay fer some grub at the old potluck in down yonder fellowship hall. See all you cowpokes there!!!!

CHURCH FAMILY MEMBERS

Please fill out this form and put it in the offering plate or give it to Becky DeJong or Lisa Steffen.



Birthdays: **example** **Claire DeJong March 10, 1996**
(of all family members) _____

***year is optional**

Anniversaries: **example** **Tom & Becky DeJong**
(please include year) **November 29, 1986**



DECEMBER 2001



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri- day	Saturday
						1
2 Sunday School 9 am Worship 10 am Hanging of the greens	3	4 Women's Bible Study @ Tilly's 7pm	5 Confirmation Class 6:30pm Choir 7pm	6 Choir 7pm		8 Sunday School Practice 1-2:30 pm Choir Rehearsal 9 am
9 Sunday School 9 am Christmas Cantata @ Worship 10 am PW Bake Sale	10	11 Women's Bible Study @ Tilly's 7pm	12 Confirmation Class 6:30pm	13	14	15 Self Defense Seminar 9am-12 noon Sunday School Practice 1-2:30 pm Confirmation Class @ Salvation Army
16 Sunday School 9am Sunday School Program @ Worship 10 am PW Bake Sale Potluck 11 am	17	18 Women's Bible Study @ Tilly's 7pm	19 Session 7:30pm	20	21	22
23 No Sunday School Worship 10 am 30	24 Worship 7pm New Year's Eve 31	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29

****Head usher for December: Jim Martin; for January: Dwight Steffen; February: Bob Gross; March: Dave Ruhnke**

Light for the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

December 2001

PARISH NURSING

The role of the Parish Nurse is a unique and specialized area of the profession of nursing. In Luke 9:2, we are told that Jesus sent out his disciples "to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal." The care of God's people in body, mind and spirit is one part of the mission of the church. As recently as 100 years ago, our churches became pioneers and leaders in the health care industry by building hospitals and schools of nursing.

Today, the health care profession and churches are becoming aware that professional nurses in the congregations can be a bridge between science and spirituality. Professional nurses who are called to ministries as Parish Nurses use their education and broad base of nursing experience to serve God's people by promoting health and wholeness among the members of the Christian community. The Parish Nurses use their gifts, profession and the healing arts to give Jesus' healing ministry a presence in the congregation.

The Parish Nurse fulfills five basic roles in the scope of their practice:

- 1/The Parish Nurse is a health educator.
- 2/The Parish Nurse is a personal health counselor.
- 3/The Parish Nurse is a teacher of volunteers.
- 4/The Parish Nurse is a liaison with community health organizations.
- 5/The Parish Nurse is a clarifier of the close relationship between faith and health.

In the Presbytery of the Northern Plains there are Parish Nurse programs in place and working from Western North Dakota to the Red River Valley. Parish Nurses provide blood pressure screening in the churches on a regular basis. They organize and sponsor health fairs. They provide education and educational opportunities for members of their congregations on

a variety of health care topics such as immunizations and well baby care, parenting, child safety, fitness and exercise, Advance Directives and living wills, and grief counseling. They make hospital visits and home visits to members of the congregation who are hospitalized and home bound.

The Parish Nurse is ministering for Jesus' sake.

- Cori Kaufmann

The Presbytery office is interested in knowing what other churches have parish nursing programs.

KENYA THROUGH MARK FRUEH'S EYES AND HEART

This was my first visit to a third world country other than the border town of Tijuana, Mexico so I was in for lots of surprises each day. We take so much for granted in our lives, especially as it relates to lifestyle and culture. We assume that most of the world lives similarly to us. However, it doesn't take very long to dispel this myth. It starts by getting on a plane and landing in Nairobi, Kenya. Every day I was in Kenya I experienced the realities of life in Kenya. Most people walk or bicycle to the places they are going. People are everywhere scurrying about to their destinations. Another big difference is that the majority of the people there don't work to get all of the toys that we are so accustomed to, they work to get the basics of life (food, shelter, clothing). If they are fortunate enough to have learned a trade, this is what they will do for the rest of their life. If they work for a company, they get a paycheck that may or may not be able to be cashed (that depends on whether the bank has any money at that time). Clean water is almost nonexistent; we drank bottled water the whole time we were there. I did not see any garbage collection companies, but who needed them, the people just

burned their trash wherever they felt like it. Nearly everyone we talked with had their own garden, which supplied much of their food. Are you starting to get the idea that life is different here?

What about the health of the church? It is my opinion that although they have all of the aforementioned hardships, they are a very happy, content people. Their hospitality toward us strangers from a far away land was phenomenal. We could not have felt more welcome or loved! My biggest regret from the whole trip is that we never had the time to be with the same people long enough to really get to know them. What a shame. They have so much to share. As we plan for the next trip, it is our desire to spend the majority of the time in one area working on one major project. This will be such a blessing to participate in, as we'll really get to know our Kenyan brothers and sisters in Christ.

To wrap up, I am not the same person who left for Kenya on Sept 3, 2001. I returned a different man changed by the experiences God had in store for me. I couldn't help but think back to a conversation (prayer) that I was having with God about 25 years ago. I was praying about my commitment to Christ and I remember saying to the Lord, "I'll do anything, just don't send me to Africa". Silly prayer then, but God knows the big picture which includes the future. God has given me a real "sense of urgency" since returning from my trip. I have a greater desire than ever to share Christ with everyone that I meet.

Mark Frueh, Paul Kuhn, Sharon Secor, Arabella Meadows-Roger and Marcia Odom are eager to share their Kenya experiences with. Call the Presbytery office (800-243-3532) to set a date.

From the EP.

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Dear Friends:

Some recent learning's from the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the Church of Scotland have sparked my thinking. In Scotland the elders serve on the session for life... but are not allowed to act on budgets or buildings! Their responsibility is solely for the spiritual welfare of the people in their charge. A separate board (sort of like trustees, I gather) deals with budgets and buildings. In Kenya too, the elders understand their role as one of spiritual uplifting, and many of them preach frequently. What would your session meetings look like if money was never an issue, but prayer and discipleship were? Just a thought.

...**Arabella**

RESOURCE CENTER

Both of **Leonard Sweet's** books, Aquachurch and Soul Tsunami, are in the Resource Center.

We have recently ordered doubles of the most popular resources for Officer Training, (Presbyterian history and theology, videos on the work of the session, etc.) so call and get one!

UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE PRESBYTERY

Growing Christians, a Leadership Development Event for Presbyterians. **Dr. Gary Watts** will speak on Discipleship. Jan 31-Feb 1, Valley City.

Worship in a New Day, April 12 – 14: three workshops on worship sponsored by Leadership Development. Offered around the Presbytery. **Rev. Gretchen Graf**, leader.

AROUND THE SYNOD

Turnaround Strategies for the 21st Century. Clearwater, Apr 26-28, 2002.

AROUND THE PCUSA

Churchwide Redevelopment Conference Jan 10-13, 2002, Phoenix

Evangelism Connection, 2002 Louisville, Apr 12-13, 2002 and Philadelphia Nov 15-16, 2002.

Small Church Celebration. April 13-16, Austin TX

BOOKS AVAILABLE

Once again the Office of Stewardship of the PCUSA is offering free books to small congregations for their pastors.

AT EASE by **John** and **Sylvia Ronsvalle**, on money and values. and

CREATING CONGREGATIONS OF GENEROUS PEOPLE by **Michael Duvall**.

Alban publishes both.

The clerk must write a letter of request to **David McCreath**, Office of Stewardship, 100 Witherspoon, Louisville, KY 40202. Supplies are limited.

LOUISVILLE - Members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) have opened up their pocketbooks to support relief efforts in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Presbyterians have contributed more than \$1.2 million through PC (USA) channels since the Sept. 11 strikes, according to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), which is coordinating the denomination's assistance effort. More than \$300,000 was collected in the first two weeks after the attacks. Six weeks after the tragedies, donations have slowed but are still coming in at a steady pace, PDA officials say.

SUMMER YOUTH INSTITUTE OF PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The SYI brings in 36 high school seniors from across the country for a 2-week program on campus. They are challenged to grow in their faith, engage in academic study and explore their

understanding of the Gospel and its implications for today's world.

Through The Lilly Endowment there are full scholarships for all students accepted into the program, which covers tuition, room, board, and scheduled activities for the 2 weeks. If you have any questions contact **Brad Walters** at syi@pts.edu.

Calendar

Dec 4 Council Mtg, GF
Dec 6 COM, Carrington
Dec 10-11 ND Executive Mtg
Dec 24 - Jan 1 Office Closed
Jan 10 COM, Carrington
Jan 18-19 Clearwater
Jan 20-22 Synod Mtg
Jan 24-25 Presbytery Meeting, Moorhead
Jan 31-1 LD Retreat, Maryvale

Mission Yearbooks of Prayer and Study are in the office and can be purchase for \$4.00 plus shipping cost. We have a limited supply so first come, first served.

January 4, 2002 will be the last day the Presbytery Office will accept mission money for 2001. Any money arriving after that date will be put towards 2002 missions.

Our presbytery **website** got a face lift and we are trying new things. Everyone should check it out at www.northernplainspresbytery.org and drop us a line on what they think. We added the newsletters to the website under media.

Light for the Northern Plains is published under the Mission Advocacy Committee (MAC) of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains. Arabella Meadows-Rogers, EP
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Barbara Ault, editor
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