

Grace Notes

Community of Grace Presbyterian Church

December 2008

December Highlights

[Christmas Worship Services.](#) We will have two services on Christmas Eve: 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. There will be only one service on December 28: at 8:30 a.m.

[Update on Process and Timing](#)

[Interim Pastor Search.](#) This is an update from our Interim Pastor Nominating Committee on our search for an interim pastor.

[Advent Conspiracy](#)

[COG Gives "Presence."](#) Beyond the commercial side of Christmas, we are encouraged to give meaningful gifts of our time and presence. A special collection in support of "Living Waters for the World" will be taken this Christmas.

[Developing the 2009 Budget](#)

[Pledges Still Coming.](#) Treasurer and Elder Tim Fluetsch reports that while most members have turned in their pledges for next year, we are still missing several. These are critical in the development of next year's budget.

Our Church Community

[Session Notes.](#) Here you will find the notes from the November 18 Session meeting.

[October Financial Update.](#) Here is our updated monthly financial picture provided by Tim Fluetsch.

[Presbyterian Links.](#) Here is a listing of helpful links for those who are interested in our denomination's work at the national level, including what Presbyterians believe.

[Church Officers.](#) Here you will find a listing of the current elders and deacons.

Children & Youth

[Birthday Party for Jesus.](#) This is one of the longest and most endearing traditions at COG. Details are posted.

Adult & Family

[January 4 Drop-in Class](#)

[Bethlehem Then and Now.](#) Lorrie Gaffney will share her first-hand experiences and impressions of Bethlehem during her November visit.

[Crossroads Items of the Month.](#) In December the Crossroads Urban Center is asking for canned tomato products this month. Their most needed item in the thrift store is new underwear.

Presbyterian Women (PW)

[Program Notes](#). Plan now for the Christmas Dinner on December 8.

[December Prayer Calendar](#). Prayers from the hearts of our members. *“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.” James 5:16*

Thanks to XMISSION for providing our church with free internet access and a website.



December

Christmas Worship Schedules

As in past years, we will have two worship services on Christmas Eve: one at 7:00 p.m. and one at 11:00 p.m. Hot chocolate will be provided after each service.

On Sunday, December 28, we will have only one service: at 8:30 a.m.



Update on Process and Timing

Interim Pastor Search

by Kelly Harris, Debbie Colt, & Dede Carpenter

Interim Pastor Nominating Committee

It is always easier to exercise patience when you know the process and expected time line of a project. Many of you have asked about our progress toward finding an interim pastor so in this article we are providing a brief explanation of the process along with some tentative time lines.

The first step in the process is for our church to complete a Church Information Form (CIF). Basically, this is a description of our church and its mission, values and goals. Through the development of our Core Spiritual Identity, that was easy to pull off the shelf and complete. Other information included census information about our membership and a broad "wish list" of the characteristics we would like to see in our Interim Pastor. The CIF was completed, approved by Session and submitted to the Presbytery in mid-November. This form acts as a job posting for interested candidates.

Throughout the month of December, 2008, we will be accepting applications for the position. We will review applications as they are received and create a list of those we are interested in reviewing further. After the deadline our committee will meet again to decide who we would like to interview in person. We do not have a specific number of interviews to make, but we anticipate interviewing three to five people. We anticipate that these interviews will take place in January.

If the above time line goes as expected, we hope to be able to make an offer to a candidate around the first week of February and have someone in the pulpit by the end of that month.

As you can see, this is not something that we just snap our fingers and have someone in place. We hope to go through this in such a way that we find the very best person for our church. If you have any questions along the way, please feel free to contact any of us.

View the two parts of our Church Information Form by clicking this link: [CIF 1](#) [CIF 2](#)



**INTERIM PASTOR
SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Advent Conspiracy

COG Gives "Presence"

by Lorrie Gaffney

Children & Youth Area Leader

What do you really want for Christmas? It seems to me that kids give better gifts than adults. They don't need to go to the mall. If asked to think up a present for mom and dad, kids can easily sort through a variety of supplies and even comic strip wrapping paper and be quite pleased. I still have the box with pictures of plants and flowers, glued on it from kids who *knew* I love gardening - and would love my gift from them; the photo frame made from tiles that would be perfect when their photo was inserted; the cards with favorite Bible verses and promises for breakfast and other gifts of time and heart; the angel that looks more like a smiling butterfly with hair. Now I'm sure I've gotten scarves and lotion and other nice things... it is just that the gifts my girls or foster kids *created* are the ones I still have around - the ones that still make me smile.

You are invited to join in the Advent Conspiracy this December by

- ❖ spending less
- ❖ giving more relationally
- ❖ helping our friends who are poor and in need



COG Christmas
"Presence"

Americans spend about \$500 billion dollars during Christmas season.

It only takes **\$10 billion to solve the world's water crisis** - crisis that **claims the lives of 3,900 children** a day. Lack of clean water is the leading cause of death in under resourced countries. 1.8 million people die every year from water born illnesses.

WWJW? What do you think Jesus would want this Christmas?

Community of Grace is joining other churches as leaders in a movement to end the water crisis by celebrating Christ in a way that we think will make Christ smile. After all, it's Jesus' birthday!

COG will be making special collections over the next several months for a PC(USA) program called ***Living Waters for the World***. We hope to raise \$5,000 to go towards a filtration system and training for 2-3 people to attend Clean Water U. At this site in Tennessee, people are trained in how to build, and train others, in setting up filtration systems. COG hopes to install a filtration system on a mission trip in 2009 as part of a new partnership.

Imagine...

...a school that has a filter to provide clean drinkable water so that kids are sent to school with water bottles to fill and take home to their families

...a young girl that doesn't have to walk an hour to find drinkable water - who is now allowed to go to school instead.

...a mom who won't have to watch another one of her children die from drinking water that was dirty.

Imagine...

...Jesus smiling when he gets just what he wanted this Christmas - **from YOU!**



Pledges Still Coming

by Tim Fluetsch

Elder & Treasurer

So far this year (11/23), pledges are down slightly from last year. If you have already pledged, thank you for putting your Faith in Action by supporting the ministries of Community of Grace. Those who have submitted their pledges have been generous in their support.

However, we are still missing pledges from some who did pledge last year. If you haven't yet pledged, we need your pledge so that Session can complete the 2009 budget and plan next year's ministries. We need your pledge to support our church's ministries, such as Sunday worship, children's Sunday School, adult bible study, and benevolent missions.

Certainly while what is done with your pledge is very important, the giving itself is even more important. In Luke the rich man is challenged by Jesus to give away all of his wealth. We are also challenged to put our faith before our wealth. Jesus calls us to give without expectation of receiving. By giving, we put Jesus ahead of our need to have money or the need to buy stuff. When Jesus speaks of the lilies of the field, the birds of the air, and their natural dependence on the grace of God to sustain them, Jesus is challenging us to depend on the goodness of God--not our own abilities. Jesus tells us to come to him as if we were children who assume our Father will provide for us.

It is as if Jesus is asking us to walk a circus tightrope without a net below. We are asked to walk in faith.

I'm a long ways from entirely depending on God. I want to...I think. But the responsible adult part of me is afraid to depend completely on God. I want to trust God, but I also want my safety net. In the meantime, I am developing my trust in God by giving and by supporting His ministries.

Join me in supporting God's ministries at Community of Grace. Please turn in your pledge card or simply respond by e-mail with your annual pledge for 2009.

Should you have any questions or comments, please contact me at 733-6111 (days),

733-5822 (evenings) or timfluetsch@xmission.com.

Our Church Community


Session Notes (*Meeting of November 18, 2008*)

by Dave Adamson
Elder

1. Pastor Marty shared some reflections on our church, including our foundation and infrastructure that will give us stability through this transition.
2. Lorrie Gaffney led the Session in developing a brainstormed list of essential characteristics of our identity that we want to preserve through the transition, and a brief discussion of our vision.
3. Dede Carpenter reported on the work of the Interim Pastor Nominating Committee, including the Church Information Form (CIF). It will be important to keep the congregation updated on our progress through Grace Notes, weekly bulletins, the website, and Sunday announcements.
4. Tim Fluetsch reported that to date we had received 58 pledges with 96 to go, which is fairly typical for this point in our stewardship campaigns.
5. Session approved a special Christmas offering for "Living Waters for the World," a PC(USA) mission project. Session also approved having only one service on December 28, conducted at 8:30 a.m., and expressed appreciation to Tom Keene and the Spirit of Joy Band for the quality of their music and consistent year-round support to worship at COG. Adjustments in the membership rolls were authorized.

October Financial Update

by Tim Fluetsch
Treasurer

2008 Income & Expenses	 Financial Update	<i>Current to 9-30-08</i>
	Year To Date	Budget Year To Date
<u>Income</u> Pledges	291,490.58	323,560.50

Other	41,908.43	44,000
Total Income	333,399.01	367,560.50
<u>Expenses</u>		
Personnel	191,657.75	191,341.50
Outreach & Mission	48,136.74	51,733.30
Operations	100,887.94	101,294.60
Children & Youth	7,918.83	11,916.90
Adult & Family	5,001.43	5,041.70
Worship	3,327.21	2,916.70
Total Expenses	356,929.90	364,244.70
Surplus (Deficit)	(23,530.89)	3,315.80

Presbyterian Links

Here are some helpful links for those who are interested in our denomination's work at the national level:

Home Page, PCUSA (www.pcusa.org)

Presbyterian 101 [Facts about Presbyterians] (www.pcusa.org/101)

Expressing Our Faith: National and International Service
(www.pcusa.org/navigation/mission.htm)

What Presbyterians Believe (www.pcusa.org/catech/studycat.htm)

Church Officers

Board of Deacons

Deacons Moderator: Lisa Wiscomb

Class of 2009

Randy Carter
Dave Fry
Barb Gentry
Lori Packard
Sharon Riley
Wes Starkenburg

Class of 2010

Cynthia Alex
Debbie Bybee
Denise Harris
Brooke Holyoak
Tom Keene
Bonnie Sackett

Class of 2011

Kim Beaslin
Elaine Nordberg
Linda Page
Lisa Wiscomb

Session

Acting Session Moderator: Rev. David Henry

Recording Secretary: Jane Cooper

Class of 2009

Tim Fluetsch

Class of 2010

Pat Holmes

Class of 2011

Kelly Harris

Dave Adamson

Chuck Stolfa

Debbie Colt

Children & Youth

Birthday Party for Jesus

by Lorrie Gaffney
Area Director of Children and Youth



All are invited to a **BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS!**

December 21, 9:45 to 10:45 am in Bethlehem (gym) - (Kick-off in sanctuary)

Celebrate God's gift to us! Parents take kids to any/all activities:

- Birthday cake and drinks
- Carnival games and face painting
- Pinecone angel craft
- Family Mission Prayer Bears
- Nativity Photo
- Coin Toss for Clean Water

Don't have any kids? Come and watch the fun over a cup of coffee and cake in the center of Bethlehem.

Hosted by COG Sunday School teaching teams. Bring friends and Neighbors!

Adult & Family

January 4 Drop-In Class

Bethlehem Then and Now

by Lorrie Gaffney
Area Director of Children and Youth



Oh Little Town of Bethlehem will never be heard in quite the same way again after returning from Israel and the West Bank of Palestine in November. Please join me on Jan. 4 for the 9:45 am Adult Drop-in Class: ***Bethlehem Then and Now***

We honor Jesus' birth as we explore the current-day stories of people in Bethlehem and the Holy Lands. Mary, Joseph, Shepherds and wise men can still be found in Israeli-occupied Bethlehem today, although the wall separating Israel from the Palestinian West Bank town of Bethlehem makes travel difficult, if not impossible, with its three guarded gates to the outside world.

Enter a refugee camp that is a permanent city, housing thousands of people and only one entrance guarded by Israeli soldiers. Meet a young Palestinian who studied as an engineer in Holland only to be persuaded that the world had enough engineers and not enough peace activists and so is now the director of Hope Flowers School (where many COG folks donated school supplies and funds). Discover a glimpse of the power of compassionate listening to uncover and connect with the very image of God in another – even as far away as Bethlehem.



Crossroads Items of the Month for December

Food Pantry: tomato-based canned goods

Thrift Store: new underwear

Presbyterian Women

by Sue Bennett
Presbyterian Women

Christmas Dinner December 8. Come and join us for delicious food and fun! Be sure to bring a friend or two. A presentation will be given by Barb Guy from the Salt Lake Tribune.

COST: \$17 per person
THEME: God will do wonders among you
SOCIAL: 6:00 p.m.
DINNER: 6:30 p.m.
SPEAKER: 7:45 p.m. Barb Guy, Salt Lake Tribune

December Prayer Calendar

by Millie Nielsen
Prayer Coordinator

1. I thank God for Pastor Marty's leadership for nine years at Community of Grace and I ask that you bless his work in Rolling Bay, Bainbridge Island, Washington.

2. Bless our deacons as they care for the members of our congregation.
3. God of encouragement, forgive me when I get discouraged and spread my discouragement to others.
4. God, grant me your sense of timing.
5. Lord, may I be used as a blessing and a friend to life.
6. Loving God, help me to see people the way you see them.
7. Lord, change me so I am ready to receive you when you come on Christmas.
8. Lord, thank you that you love me as I am, but you never leave me there.
9. Give this congregation wisdom and the willingness to work together at this time of pastoral vacancy.
10. Bless Dede and Lorrie as they carry on the leadership of our ministry at Community of Grace
11. Heavenly father, help me accept love as it is given even though it may not come in the package I requested.
12. Lord, help me to walk with you in grace today.
13. I pray for all people who are in war zones today.
14. Clear my mind of all but Christian joy and the gift of Jesus Christ.
15. Lord God, I give thanks for places of simplicity and peace. Help me find such a place within myself.
16. Guide our session as they meet to make decisions during this period without a pastor.
17. Lord, give me a sense of humor. Give me the grace to see a joke.
18. In this season of short days and long nights, of grey and white, and cold, teach me the lessons of waiting.
19. Lord, I am weak and so I need your strength to carry on.
20. Dear God, I praise you for who you are - creator, redeemer, and loving heavenly father.
21. O Lord, teach me to live more fully in the joy of your coming.
22. Lord, give me the gift I need so I become the gifts others need.
23. I ask for your healing for all who are ill.
24. I hear whispers of peace in the stillness, fresh breezes of promise stirring, a baby's cry of hope.
25. In the darkness I see the light and I find it a cause for celebration for the darkness cannot overcome it.
26. Lord, give me wisdom in dealing with difficult people and situations in my life.
27. Lord, Give your strength to those who struggle with addictions.
28. Inspire my heart with praise for the Lord Jesus Christ.
29. May the leaders of our country seek service rather than power.
30. Bless the peacemakers of the world and make me one of them.
31. The storms of time have scattered me, many sorrows have scarred me, many accomplishments have disappointed me, much activity has wearied me, so gather me to yourself to rest in you.

