

*Creating sanctuary
for all*

First Light

This Issue

A Minute in Ministry

Spiritual Life Ministry

Open House and Murals unveiling
Youth Group Mitten Tree
Christmas Caroling

Community Outreach Ministry

MACS Coat Drive
MACS Christmas Drive
Family Giving Program
SERRV

Administrative Ministry

Stewardship
Properties Update

Our Community

Calendar of Events
Birthdays

www.sanctuaryforall.org

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Vol. 11 Issue 11 News from the First Presbyterian Church, Marshall December 2009

A Minute in Ministry

Around this time of year, I often feel there are two Christmases being celebrated. We hang our lights, decorate our homes, bake our delicacies and do whatever gift preparing or shopping to express our love. It's a time to go, go, go. It's a time filled with beauty, joy and sentimentality ... and stress. And amid all the secular celebration, when we turn for a moment to look for Christ, I believe there is something of God's goodness we find midst it all. Love. Moments of awe that catch our breath or send a tingle to our toes. Life, in the words of John, that brings light to all people ... light that shines into the darkness.

Still, this month there is a second kind of Christmas we celebrate in the church. Actually, it isn't even Christmas at all, until close to the end of the month. It's Advent. It's time to be quiet. It's time to prepare. It's about looking forward to the one who is to come. We watch and wait, listen and long for God, lighting first just one candle then more and more as hope continues to grow around the wreath and "love deepens round the hearth." We don't just participate in the ways of our world around. God calls us to reflect on how those ways may reveal God's intention for our lives or not.

Sometimes, I travel around these weeks leading up to Christmas and I think I understand that bit in the Bible about no room in the inn. No parking spots. No time left on our calendars. No silence free from carols or news or phone conversations? No money remaining in our accounts? And we might risk ... no place in our lives for us to see the Christ?

If you're like me, sometimes these two ways we celebrate Christmas don't always seem as though they reflect the same spirit. But I want them to. I long to plug strings of lights into the Light of the World. I long to integrate God's ways of grace and mercy, justice and righteousness with the choices we make about gifts and events. I long to hear the Bible story read on Christmas Eve as our narrative, my personal story in some way.

(Continue on next page)

CREATING SANCTUARY FOR ALL

**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**



Staff

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Regular office hours Monday –
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Suzanne Weeldreyer
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sweeldreyer@att.net

Clerk of Session

Phil Mershon
269.781.5290
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A Minute in Ministry (Continued)

Truth is, anticipation adds meaning to any occasion. Just as we may eagerly imagine a look on someone's face when they receive a gift. We need to open the eyes of our heart to scan the horizon of activity, to peer through the fog of our fears, to discover in the mirror in front of us the loving gaze of God. How can we peel away the layers of tradition or expectation? How can we step out of the hustle and bustle on main street, wander down the block with noises receding into the distance, then peer around a corner to find wonder filling a simple stable? God's promise is we will feel love incarnate among us, sharing all our blessings and transforming all our burdens.

I guess I don't know how you will do it in your own way. There are many opportunities through our church – personal devotionals, AWOL, caroling, SERRV, preparing gift baskets, giving to our adopted MACS families, sharing in conversation at our Forum or Sunday Night Cinema, and others. I'd simply like to encourage us all to make that step; to open our hearts; to take whatever moment each day to set our spirits right with God's Spirit ... however long the lines, whatever frustrations we face, whenever stresses seem to get the best of us. And let's begin with worship.

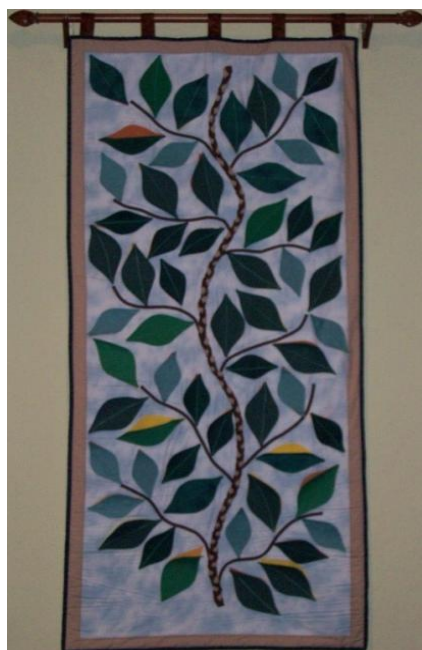
We'll celebrate with all the parties and more secular traditions. And in God's grace, there will be much goodness in it. And let's all make the place and time at 10:15 on the next several Sunday mornings to pray "O come, O come Emmanuel...", to wonder "O Lord, how shall we meet you?"; to listen with Mary for the angel Gabriel and the watchman telling us of the night. Then finally we'll burst with "joy to the world" and be at peace on the "silent night, holy night."

In the end, may we with Mary "treasure all these words and ponder them in our hearts." May we with shepherds "return, glorifying and praising God for all we hear and see, as it is told to us." (Luke 2:19-20)

Grace and peace,

Seth

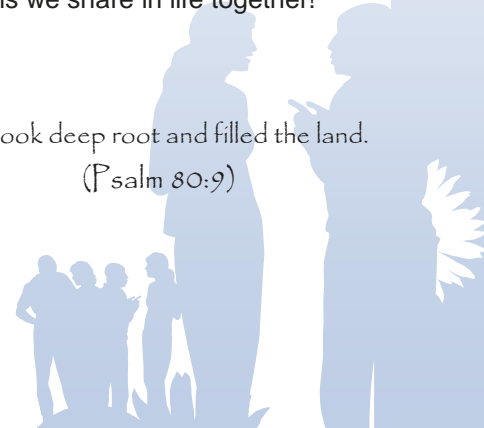
Growing Deep and Wide



Thanks for all the generous pledges we have received so far, supporting our ministry and mission work in 2010! If you haven't pledged yet, please consider how God calls you to give. Session will finalize the 2010 budget this month. Your pledge helps us plan faithfully.

Again, thank you, in God's grace, for all the contributions we share in life together!

... it took deep root and filled the land.
(Psalm 80:9)



News from the PWA

PWA Purpose and Mission Statement

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves: To nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study ... To support the mission of the Church worldwide ... To work for justice and peace ... And to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promise of God's Kingdom.

December PWA Board Meeting

We will be meeting in the Church Board Room at 7:00 on December 7. Please contact Lisa DeGraw at 841-6787 if you'd like to present an issue for discussion so that we can add you to our Agenda. All are invited to attend!

Annual Christmas Tea

Saturday, December 5 at 2:00 in Fellowship Hall: Join us for tea, coffee and desserts as we welcome the Christmas Season! Bring a favorite tea or coffee cup for your beverage. We will be announcing our 2009 PWA Woman of the Year at the Tea! We will also hold a "Card Party" that day for MACs. Please bring a gift certificate or gift card from any of our many family-oriented businesses here in Marshall. These gift certificates or cards will be given to MACs so that they can share them with families in need. Suggestions for gift cards are: The Bogar Theater, Family Video, Family Fare, Save A Lot, Dollar General, Kmart, or any restaurant or fast-food establishment. Gas or phone cards are also welcome.

2010 Scull Calendars

The Scull Calendars are still available for \$5 each. The New Year is right around the corner, and these make perfect wall or desk calendars. Use one to post special PWA dates and remind yourself to attend one of our gatherings!

PWA Annual Dues

As we near the end of the current year and look ahead to the future, it's with a realization that the needs in our community and beyond are greater than ever. Because of this, we are all personally inundated with requests for monetary assistance from organizations far and wide. In these hard economic times, it can be difficult to consider the needs of others when the needs of our own families should, rightly, take priority. The annual dues we collected from our members this year fell below our usual amounts, which is likely reflective of the belt-tightening that all households have had to make. But, we hope that you will prayerfully consider helping us again in 2010 with any amount of money that your budget can support. We use the money we collect from our membership through the annual dues and any of our other fund raisers to share with our community in many ways, including support of Mobile Meals, MACs, the Fountain Clinic, the Charitable Union, the family Christmas baskets program, our Deacon's fund, and Oaklawn Hospital's "Baby Showers in a Bag" program. We attempt to be very good stewards of your money while helping these and other causes that come to our attention. So, when we shift gears and plan for the New Year, we will again ask you for the support you have so generously given in the past. The pooling of our funds will do so much for so many! We wish each and every one of you a blessed Christmas and all good wishes for a New Year where good health, happiness and prosperity

First Light



First Light



Volunteers

Liturgists

December 6

Jack Vandy Bogurt

December 13

Ken MacNevin

December 20

Creighton Sherman

December 27

Doug Gilbertson

Greeters

December 6

Glenn & Diane Kowalske

December 13

Bruce & Arlene Smith

December 20

Julie Bolen

December 27

The Almaraz Family

Coffee Hour Hosts

December 6

Kat Whaley, Christi Barrett,
Suzanne Weeldreyer

December 13

Bea & Reza Shareghi

December 20

The Dailys & The Karns

December 27

TBD

News from Christian Education

Sunday School Open House and Mural Unveiling

The murals in the upstairs classrooms are completed and they look wonderful! We'd like to invite you to take a look after worship on **Sunday, December 6** when the classrooms will be open for visitors. The Sunday school classes will have some of their crafts and projects out on display for parents to take a look at as well. Thank you to Kat Whaley for her creative talent in drawing and painting these murals. Thank you as well to all who helped her by painting the walls and doing the detail painting – Phyllis Rabbideau, Seth Weeldreyer, Jeri Rodebaugh, and John Ickes.

Youth Group Mitten Tree

Sunday, November 22 following our Thanksgiving meal, the youth group spent time preparing their mitten tree, talking about prayer and making prayer beads. The mitten tree is up in the lobby! Please take a pair of mittens and replace them with a real pair of gloves or mittens for someone who can use some outerwear this winter. All sizes are appreciated, kids and adults. The youth group will pack them up and take them to local charities that will distribute them.

Youth Group Sledding Party

Sunday, December 13 from **2:00 – 4:00 pm** is the Youth Group sledding party hosted by the Weeldreyers. Join us at 335 N. Mulberry St. for sledding and winter fun followed by hot chocolate. Please call Mrs. Kowitz (789-0892) to RSVP for this event by *Thursday, December 10* so we'll know how many to expect. Please invite a friend or two!

Christmas Eve Worship

Our Service of Lessons, Carols and Candlelight will begin at 7:00 pm with special music approximately a half hour before. Children are invited to bring forward crèche figures – please, complete a sign up sheet available on the east landing at the back of the sanctuary, and return it to the office. We will end, as always with singing "Silent Night" by candlelight.

Christmas Joy Offering

On Christmas Eve we will receive a special offering – the Joy Offering. This offering goes to benefit retired and disabled clergy in financial need, and Presbyterian colleges specifically serving at risk ethnic students. Please, give generously as you are able.

Sunday Night Cinema

Sunday, December 13 – *Love Actually* ... a fitting movie as we all try to live from the depths of true love through the holiday season. It's targeted for adults. We'll begin at 6:30. Tell Seth what date in January / February may work for *Slumdog Millionaire*!



Calendar Highlights

Saturday, December 5	PWA Annual Christmas Tea, 2pm
Sunday, December 6	Second Sunday of Advent Communion Luke 1:68-79; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
Monday, December 7	PWA Board Meeting, 7pm
Tuesday, December 8	Mary Martha, 10am
Sunday, December 13	Third Sunday of Advent Christmas Music Sunday Isaiah 12:2-6; Luke 3:1-18
Monday, December 14	Teams, 6:30/7pm
Tuesday, December 15	Esther Circle, 7pm
Sunday, December 20	Fourth Sunday of Advent Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:39-55
Monday, December 21	Deacons, 7pm
Thursday, December 24	Christmas Eve Service, 7pm Service of Lessons and Carols and Candlelight
Friday, December 25	Christmas
Sunday, December 27	First Sunday after Christmas Luke 2:41-52; Colossians 3:12-17 Christmas carols and their meaning
Monday, December 28	Session, 630pm

AA meets each night of the week at 8:00pm.

December Life at First Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 TOPS 8:30am	2 Choirs 6pm	3 Sip & Stitch 10am Prayer & Share 9am	4 Painters 1pm	5 PWA Christmas Tea 2pm
6 Worship 10:15am Communion	7 PWA 7pm	8 TOPS 8:30am Mary Martha 10am	9 Choirs 6pm	10 Sip & Stitch 10am Prayer & Share 9am	11 Painters 1pm	12
13 Worship 10:15am	14 Teams 630/7pm	15 TOPS 8:30am Esther Circle 7pm	16 Choirs 6pm	17 Sip & Stitch 10am Prayer & Share 9am	18 Painters 1pm	19
20 Worship 10:15am	21 Deacons 7pm	22 TOPS 8:30am	23 Choirs 6pm	24 Christmas Eve Service 7pm	25 Christmas	26
27 Worship 10:15am	28 Session 630pm	29 TOPS 8:30am	30	31 Sip & Stitch 10am Prayer & Share 9am		

First Light

Birthdays

December 1
Kim Howard
Kara Sherman

December 2
Michelle Mees

December 3
Diane Kowalske
Christine Whitesell
Jerome Kortzen

December 5
Laura Gilbertson

December 6
Patricia Winstanley
Nathan Cox

December 12
Bev Williams
Lupe Fitch
Katie Zaharion

December 14
Glenn Kowalske

December 15
Phyllis Rosenau
Don Backus
Dorothy Gordon

December 16
Kevin Howard

December 17
Michael McNeil

December 18
Danielle Barton

December 21
Melanie Wheeler

December 22
Hannah Hale

December 23
Phyllis Riley

December 24
Ken Reddick
Beatrice Shareghi

December 26
Gerry Love
Sarah DeGraw
Rebecca DeGraw

December 27
Miranda Bolton

December 28
Ed Strand

December 29
Jill Vogt



MACS

Family Giving Program 2009

Many families will find it much harder to enjoy a merry Christmas this year. Our **Family Giving Program** is a way to reach out to folks who have needs this Christmas and show them the love and care we all enjoy. Once again we will adopt several families in our community to reach out to this year through the Christmas Clearing Bureau. The angel tree with their gift requests will go up in Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, November 22**. Please take a tag or two! **All gifts should be new**. Please return the gifts to the tree, *wrapped and with the tag securely fastened to the outside of the present*. Please return all gifts no later than **Friday, December 18**.

We will prepare everything for delivery on **Saturday, December 19** and would love to have some help that day from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. If you or your family would like to help with the deliveries on **Sunday, December 20**, we will need at least five drivers and delivery can be coordinated to fit your schedule that afternoon. Thank you for helping these families and for extending a bit of our love to them this Christmas! If you'd like to volunteer to help or have any questions, please contact Suzanne Weeldreyer (789-1537) or Kristin Kowitz (789-0892) as soon as possible.

Christmas Drive

The CLEARING BUREAU will be November 16-20, 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Trinity Church. Maurice Shackel will set up program. BASKET WEEK will be December 13, (Sunday evening) through Thursday the 17th.

Coat Drive

Donate coats. The coats should be clean and in good condition. Drop off coats at Zion Lutheran Church on Sundays between 12:00 and 2:00.

Spiritual Development Opportunities

We continue with two opportunities on Sunday. Before worship beginning at 8:45 we explore themes of the Bible to guide the heart of our faith. And on the first Sunday of the month we gather after worship and fellowship time (with lunch if you choose) for First Sunday Forum. On first Sundays of the month, both opportunities will be offered, before and after worship.

- 1) A small group Bible theme exploration ... guided by the book *Great Themes of the Bible, vol. 2*, by Sarah Henrich. It is available at Fireside Books in Marshall for \$13.45. This study will continue until Christmas with the monthly schedule as follows:
11/29 ch 11 – Reconciliation
12/6 ch 12 – Resurrection
12/13 ch 13 – Word
- 2) First Sunday Forum—Reclaiming Christmas: Seeking an Alternative – Sunday, December 6.
If you're anything like most Americans, the upcoming Christmas season will be a mixed blessing. Amid holiday gatherings we try in some way to focus on "the reason for the season." And we may find ourselves eating too much, drinking too much, spending too much, and experiencing too much stress about family gatherings and gift giving. Do we have that nagging feeling Christmas should somehow be different? What might an alternative Christmas look like for people of faith?

Materials from *the Thoughtful Christian* and *Christian Century* have been photocopied to stimulate our conversation. They are available on a table in the Eagle Street entry. Hope to see you after worship / fellowship on December 6. And if you have ideas for future discussions, please contact Seth!



Properties Update

A lot has happened over the last few months. Members of the Congregation came out and sealed the leaking flat roof over fellowship Hall. The motor in Fellowship Hall air handler began to smoke/failed, and was replaced. Outdated thermostats have been replaced throughout the church, many of which were corroded and no longer functioned correctly. We have worked tirelessly to insulate around the church doors and windows, including new thresholds. We hired Steve Harrington to restore the Eagle Street door. A new name-tag holder was built and installed in September, along with a new bulletin/letter board created for inside the Eagle Street entry. We will be planning additional workdays in the New Year to continue the maintenance and upkeep of our church. Many, many thanks for all the help!!!!!!

Ushers Schedule

December 6

Head Usher – Abby Mershon
Elevator – Maggie Barrett
Bulletins – Alix Cornow, Madison Gilbertson
Acolytes – Allison Brownell, Alex Veale

December 13

Head Usher – Nick Vetter
Elevator – Ben Lillrose
Bulletins – Katie Howard, Brooke Uzzle
Acolytes – Lacey Almaraz, Nicole Almaraz

December 20

Head Usher – Jamie Daily
Elevator – Nolan Levack
Bulletins – Ken Kowitz, Nathaniel Weeldreyer
Acolytes – Ailih Weeldreyer, Gabriel Weeldreyer

December 27

Head Usher – Morgan Koetje
Elevator – Adam Dale
Bulletins – Kay Dale, Ally Johnson
Acolytes – Riley Brownell, Nicholas Lillrose

If you cannot serve on your assigned Sunday, please arrange a trade or substitute, then notify Phil Mershon and the church office of your change - Thanks!

Session Action

At its regular November meeting, your Session did the following:

At its regular November meeting, the main topic of discussion was the operating budget for 2010. Further discussion will take place at the December meeting. Much still needs to be done to determine how to increase income and decrease expenses in order to have those two figures more nearly in line with each other.

Respectfully Submitted,
Phil Mershon, Session Clerk.

Congregational Action

At a special meeting of the Congregation on November 22, Shirley Clothier, Michael McNeil, Creighton Sherman, and Jim VanderWeg were elected to three-year terms as Ruling Elders on Session; Jean Cox, Linda Daily, and Bea Shareghi were elected to three-terms on the Board of Deacons; and Dorothy Gordon was elected to one year to fill a vacancy on the Board of Deacons.

Respectfully Submitted,
Phil Mershon, Session Clerk.

First Light

Teams

Administrative Ministry Team

Brad Whaley, Treasurer
269.781.2073

Finance

Joelle Knoch
269.789.1339

Personnel

Jim VanderWeg
269.781.3432

Properties

Whitney Jonas
269.753.9951

Stewardship

Rich Healey
269.789.0665

Community Outreach

Ministry Team

Michael McNeil
269.789.0721

Mission

JoEllen Gilbert
269.789.1500

Evangelism

Doug Gilbertson
269.781.3101

Spiritual Life Ministry Team

Diane Kowalske
269.781.8529

Worship

Ken MacNevin
269.781.3329

Christian Education

Steve Hanway
269.789.0827

Fellowship

Creighton Sherman
269.781.2267

Deacons

Karen Earl
269.781.3211

Women's Association

Lisa DeGraw
269.841.6787



SERRV

What is Fair Trade? SERRV SALES The Fair Trade system ensures that people along every step of the supply chain receive fair wages, that workers and communities are treated with dignity, and that artisans and producers take steps to preserve the environment. Fair trade builds real and lasting relationships between producers in developing countries and businesses and consumers in more developed areas all around the world. The Fair Trade economy is based on justice, dignity, empowerment, transparency, and respect for people and the planet. *(from Green America's Guide To Fair Trade)*

You can be a part of this system by researching companies that sell fairly traded goods and foods. There are many online sources, just Google "fair trade". Ask your librarian about resources that list retailers and others who work to support fairly traded products. Or shop our SERRV Sale! The SERRV sales continue this month each Sunday through December 13. You will find our tables of artisan products in the fellowship hall during coffee hour. Please take a look – you may find the perfect gift for a loved one on your list. And you would be giving a gift to the artisan or farmer as well!

Christmas Caroling

Christmas caroling is Sunday, December 6, 2009 and is open to everyone! Please gather in Fellowship Hall at 3:15pm. Carolers will travel to Tendercare Nursing Home at 3:30pm, then onto Marshall House Apartments at 4pm, and finally Homebound members and friends at 4:30pm. A hot dinner will be provided in Fellowship Hall at 5:30pm. Come join in the fun and fellowship. Caroling books and car pooling will be provided.

Sunday Service, December 27th

Traditionally Christmas continues through the 12th Day of Christmas (Jan 6) and we will continue to celebrate Christ's coming during our Sunday service on Dec. 27th. Sometimes we have "This I Believe" in lieu of a sermon. On Dec. 27th we'll sing what we believe in lieu of a sermon. Come join in singing traditional (and maybe even a few new) songs of Christmas.

First Light

Published Monthly



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