

The Witness

Reverend Lynne D Trout

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December 2008

WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT CHRISTMAS?

Consider this: God loved the world so much that he came visiting. God slipped into the world as a helpless baby, without fanfare or heraldry.

Think of it: The baby, born of humble parents, the man a carpenter, the woman still in her teens, scholars say. Jesus was born in a backwater town called Bethlehem, in a stable reeking with animal smells.

It took years before people fully comprehended God's self-revelation. Even John the Baptist, sitting in Herod's prison, sent a message to Jesus asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or are, we to wait for another?" (Matthew 11:3, NRSV). Jesus then explained that he was working miracles and bringing good news to the poor.

That became even more clear when Peter concluded that Jesus was "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16, NRSV).

What's amazing about Christmas is that it began in a manger. And today more than 2 billion people around the world celebrate Jesus' birth.

"Sleepover in the Stable" will portray this amazing story through the children of the church. Come December 14 at 11:00 a.m. to the Fellowship Hall and relive the amazing story of Christmas. Let the Spirit of Christmas bring you peace. Let the Gladness of Christmas bring you hope. Let the Heart of Christmas show you love. Let the Gift of Christmas become your Christ.

Presbyterian Youth Group will meet on second & fourth Sundays in December (4:00-5:30 p.m.). All youth from 3rd Grade up are welcome!



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Don't forget to send in your Christmas Poinsettia Dedication! \$9.50 for Poinsettias (red, white, pink) in honor or memory or celebration dedications with check to Vera Taylor by Dec. 14.

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"Strive to be first;
first to nod,
first to smile,
first to complement
and first to forgive."
—Anonymous



Christmas Worship Schedule

December 24
5:00 pm Children's
8:00 pm Candles &
Communion

**Church Staff
Updates**
See Church Notes!



9:00 am-Breakfast with
Jesus
9:30 am-Church School
10:00 am-Choir Re-
hearsal
11:00 am-Worship Ser-

**Ralph McCullough
May 19, 1928
October 20, 2008**

On a beautiful autumn morning, Ralph Lehre McCullough died peacefully with family members and friends at his side. Ralph was born in Delanco, NJ and was a lifetime resident.

Ralph prided himself on his devotion to Delanco and was honored as the 2008 Delanco Memorial Day parade Grand Marshall. Ralph was a long time member (fifty four years) of First Presbyterian and he served as an elder and member of the Buildings & Grounds Committee.

Ralph retired from Rohm and Haas after 37 years. He was a lifetime member of Washington Fire Company, Delanco since joining in 1949.

Ralph was married fifty years to Doris Edge and together they have children: Carole, Luan Sitzman, Jane Olley, Chris, and Roland and many grandchildren and great grandchildren who will miss him because their father found a way to attend all their children's sporting events in spite of working shifts. Ralph will also be missed by his sisters: Marge Gatti and Eleanor Britton, and brother: George.

Memorials are designated to Deacons Scholarship Fund.

MISSION NEWS!

—Thank you one and all for your support of the missions we share here at First Presbyterian Church.

†† Currently an angel tree in the Annex to benefit Keswick so please take an envelope and bring back items. Thanks for your support in this hands on mission.

†† Christian Books Fair coming in January
So... Please donate your gently used Christian books and cookbooks to be sold in January to benefit our missions.

Thanks again for your support to all missions! Gerrie Diehm
Call 856-461-6286 for further details.

—Shawl Ministry to start in January, contact Sue Mullen or Pastor Lynne for more details.

—Church World Service & SERRV International at New Windsor MD invites people from around the United States to come share the work at the Care Kits / Blankets / Clean-up Buckets center or SERRV International warehouse. Church World Service & SERRV International operates through people donating their time and talents to work at various tasks such as folding blankets for shipment, building Care Kits from donated items, pricing and re-packaging items for fair trade sales around the USA.

—On November 3rd a few people went to New Windsor with me to work at both SERRV and Church World Service. The need for volunteers is an ongoing activity so we have scheduled to go again on February 15-16. Come join me in February. **Jeanne Mehling**

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

—IHN WEEK was held at First Presbyterian on November 2-9 with two families being helped: Ronnesha with two kids & Ruby with three kids. It was a good week. Thanks to all who came to help.

—The IHN week will be held here next time on Sunday, January 18th. Please contact me if you would like to help. People are needed to set up beds, to move beds, to be overnight with families, to break down & to move beds.

—This is a local mission project, here, in Burlington County. We help local working homeless families. If you have never had an opportunity to help before, take the time now. It is well worth the effort, just ask any former and/or current volunteer.
Please contact Jackie Nixon 856-461-5044.

PASTOR LYNNE

Advent Message

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will be well into the Advent season in church. An older Christmas song comes to my mind. For those of you who are of an age to remember and/or admit, I have a collection of Firestone Tires Christmas albums (we are talking about 33-1/3 RPM vinyls!), one of which has songs by Jack Jones and others (ok, so I am dating myself!). One song says: "This is that time of the year, a tinsely, glittery time." We are in "that time of the year" where everyone rushes around planning, shopping, and wrapping.

But while we are being busy with the commercial things of the season, we want to remember the spiritual aspects as well. I have two Bible passages running through my head as I write this. Both are sung in my favorite holiday music, Handel's *The Messiah*. First is Isaiah 9:2 which says: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined." Isaiah, whose name means "Yahweh is salvation," is an Old Testament prophet who is quoted in the New Testament more than 250 times. Isaiah prophesies the Messiah as the virgin-born child of God who suffers to bring us salvation. The second passage is Isaiah 40:1-11, especially verse 3: "A voice cries out, 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God'." In Isaiah 9, Christ's birth is predicted. In Isaiah 40, we are told about John the Baptist who is called by God to prepare the way for the Messiah.

Today, you and I can be modern-day Isaiah's by remembering to focus on Christ's birth as the true reason for celebrating Christmas. We can spread the good news of the Gospel to everyone and prepare the way for the coming of our Lord. We prepare the foods and gifts, decorate our homes and the church. But are we preparing our hearts, minds, and souls as well?

Let us show others the light and love of Christ and encourage them to follow Christ's light to come out of their darkness. Share the love of God and the Gospel with those around us. In preparing ourselves to receive Christ this Christmas, empower others to prepare to receive Him as well. Invite those you know to learn of Christ, to enjoy God's presence in their lives, and to rejoice in the spiritual good tidings of this holiday season. Open your hearts and your arms to reach out to others and to share God's love with everyone!

I encourage you to invite friends, neighbors, and inactive members to worship with us in Advent, especially on December 14th at 11:00 a.m. when worship will be in the Fellowship Hall and the Sunday School department's play will be the sermon. Also, please join us on Christmas Eve for a family service at 5 :00 p.m. and a communion service at 8:00 p.m. Both will be candlelight services. Let your light shine and join us! May God bless you all this Christmas, and may you have a happy, healthy New Year! —**Pastor Lynne**

Confirmation Class

On Sunday, December 14, 2008, after worship there will be a meeting of eligible youth who are interested in attending confirmation class. The confirmation class will begin in January. Those youth who are in sixth grade or older are eligible to attend. The meeting will be for youth and their parent(s). This is an informational meeting in which Pastor Lynne will discuss requirements and will answer questions. We will meet in the Memorial Room. Please call the church office at 856-461-2515 to indicate you are coming. Please plan to attend.

New Member Class for Adults will be forming soon. If you are interested in joining our church, please see Pastor Lynne or call the church office.

Reverend Lynne D Trout

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(Please! Use Post Office Box for mailing)
(856) 461-2515
(856) 461-8615 FAX
Church Office Hours: 8:30 a.m.—12:30 a.m.



THE
WITNESS

“The holy one to be born
will be called the
Son of God.”

Luke 1:35, NIV



Christmas is Proof

Christmas is a time to be happy!... A time for celebration and sharing. For God stoops down to be one of us, born as a poor baby so that we can be rich. He does not leave us to get along as best we can. He joins us where we are. God is committed to us. Christmas is proof that God cares. That is why we celebrate — and show our care in turn to those who need it.

—F. Hebart

CHURCH NOTES



Newsletter Production helping hands
 We will meet during 3rd or 4th week so that the Witness is sent out before end of the month. Anyone who would like to help gather articles for the newsletter please contact:
 —Jeanne Mehling



Choir Rehearsal

Choir Rehearsals in December
 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month
 7:00 p.m.
 and each Sunday at 10:00 am
 Contact Nancy Gager

Church Staff Updates

Session has voted to accept the applications from Nicole Olenick as the Nursery attendant and Ed Kemble as the Sexton again. Welcome! Niclole started in November and Ed will start in December.

THANK YOU!

—Thank you for donating your **2008 Per Capita! \$2056/\$3065**
 —\$3209 is needed for 2009
 —\$39.00 per capita from 83 members in 2009
PLEASE HELP BY DONATING ABOVE YOUR CURRENT FUND DONATIONS TO THANKSGIVING, TO CHRISTMAS & TO PER CAPITA!

Monthly Meetings During September—June

Worship & Music Committee Meeting
 on 1st Monday at 10:00 a.m.
Deacons Meeting
 on 1st Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
Christian Education Meeting on 1st Sunday after worship
 ⇨ **PLEASE NOTE COMMITTEE REPORTS**
 Should be copied & Distributed by Sunday before each **Session Meeting** on 3rd Monday at 7:00 p.m.
Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting
 3rd Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.
Mission Committee Meeting
 (See Gerrie Diehm)

Chancel Flowers Dedications

Two flower bouquets are used at Sunday worship services.

Each flower bouquet costs \$8.00. Please make checks to Deacon's Flower Fund. When dedications are not made then the flowers are paid out of donations for other purposes. You may take them home or donate to shut-ins.

Flower dedications are available all year long:

1. sign up for a date in the Annex
2. contacting Vera Taylor (856) 461-6074
3. write to the church with your dedication and check for one or two bouquets.

Flowers Needed for Jan / Feb / Mar



Please Don't Forget your Church

UPDATES OF SOLDIERS IN MILITARY

*Owen Brennan — McGuire AFB, NJ
 *Chief MSgt. Chris McCullough — Texas—congratulations!
 Jason Carroll—now in IRAQ
 Dan Morales—IRAQ
 Donald Seymour—deployed to Qatar

DELANCO SENIOR CITIZENS

MEETS AT NOON EVERY SECOND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM SEPTEMBER 2008 UNTIL MAY 2009.