

PVEC Happenings



Panther Valley Ecumenical Church Official Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 6

November 2009

Celebrating Advent At Home

By Betty Schultheis

Once again I embarked on my annual Internet search for "Advent" and once again I was amazed and energized by the creative ways to celebrate this wonderful Holy season with family and friends.

Let me recommend to all of you that you do a little research about ways to celebrate Advent with your family. You will be delighted with the creative suggestions and ideas for involving all ages in an interesting, fun, and meaningful way to celebrate Advent in your home. You may choose to make an Advent Calendar. There are suggestions for some very elaborate wall-hangings of felt as well as simple paper ones.

You will also enjoy reading about ways to "simplify" the Holiday Season and make it more meaningful. You might choose to do this by making your own nativity scene and completing a piece or two each day. This year we are making our own Christmas gifts.

You may choose to celebrate each evening of Advent with a quiet family time where an appropriate story is shared as an example of the "message" contained in the Advent scripture reading for the day.

Whatever you decide to do, involve the whole family in making the plan and in the plan's execution....and have an enjoyable Advent Season!

OUR RUMMAGE SALE LEFT-OVERS GO TO GOOD USE!

By Jennifer Chisholm, Hackettstown PTA

For the last year, Hackettstown Elementary PTA has sponsored two clothing/toy drives to help benefit the elementary schools and the middle school in Hackettstown. In the Fall and again in the Spring, the PTA collects used, clean, clothing, accessories (shoes & belts), linens, bedding, stuffed animals and children's toys to donate to A & E Clothing Corporation. A&E Clothing Corporation then processes the used clothing and exports them overseas to South America, Europe and Africa to help those in need.

This past Spring, the PTA was able to help your parish out by collecting all left over clothing from the Rummage Sale. Now in the Fall, the PTA has once again picked up all leftover clothing from our Rummage Sale. Not only does it make it easier for the church for clean up, it's good to know that the leftovers will benefit a family in need. The Hackettstown Elementary PTA appreciates the opportunity to have your leftovers and look forward to working with your parish in the future.



“Acknowledging Our Past / Looking Ahead”

This Sunday, we're celebrating 40 Years of Ministry at Panther Valley Ecumenical Church. I find it only fitting that our anniversary coincides with Thanksgiving Day since we have a lot to be thankful for as a church.

You've been blessed with a rich history of more than two thousand members in our church register, hundreds of baptisms and weddings, four called ministers and a number of interim pastors, a wonderful facility, new building additions, and great music.

I know too that it hasn't always been smooth sailing in our church's forty years together. We've been through conflicts over ministers, styles of worship, money, and at times, it's felt like we've lost our vision. But God has been with this church each step of the way, even when things felt discouraging. Ultimately, it is gathering for worship that always brings us back to God and reminds us why we're here.

Your faithfulness in stewardship this fall

is a testament to how much you all believe in the vitality of the ministry of this church. Thanks to you all, we've seen a 50% increase in Sunday worship attendance, a revived church choir, a new vibrant weekly bible study, an active Sunday School program, a new partnership youth group, and a new handbell choir. Plus we've been able to share with hundreds of our neighbors in need through food ministry of The Lord's Pantry and other local outreach efforts. Your pledges also show that even in rough economic waters, you all are committed to ministry of this church, the leadership of its pastor and ecumenical council, and the direction we're headed.

We have many exciting goals for the church for the year ahead, including diversifying our worship, growing in discipleship towards new members, broadening our welcome to the community, strengthening partnerships with other churches and ministries in our area, and improving our facility- both through maintenance and repair of the existing

“Ultimately, it is gathering for worship that always brings us back to God and reminds us why we're here.” -Pastor Wright

structure, and exploring ways we can become more physically accessible to persons of all abilities.

This coming Sunday we'll be celebrating worship with many friends past, including your founding minister, Rev. Bill McGregor and Presbytery organizer, the Rev. Jim Chesnutt. Both of them have expressed just how excited they are to see the direction this church is headed. So as we go through our growing pains, let us focus on giving thanks to God for where we have been and look in faith and hope to God, who will guide us on our way.

I am proud and excited to be your new pastor, and I look forward to sharing fellowship and worshipping together with all of you for many seasons to come.

Quote of the Month

“The joy of brightening other lives, bearing others' burdens, easing other's loads and supplanting empty hearts and lives with generous gifts becomes for us the magic of Christmas.” -W. C. Jones

Sunday School News

By Betty Schultheis

We are pleased to announce that the children will be costumed participants in our 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service this year. You may look forward to seeing small angels, shepherds and wisemen enhance the telling of the Christmas Story. The donkey, Mary and Joseph will also be present as will baby Jesus. The costumes will be going home with the children on December 6 and we will have a brief rehearsal following morning worship on December 20th.

We have been studying Joseph and Moses during the fall quarter. Some of the children's handiwork is on display on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. We have also been acting out, in costume, some of the Bible stories. Moses came to visit the Sunday School class on November 16th and brought us a copy of the 10 Commandments which he explained to us.

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

Support Services

By Ron Reece

Building and Grounds committee has received a donation of daffodil bulbs in memory of Shirley Lockheed and they will be planted by the youth garden to express Shirley's eternal youthful attitude. Also, the commission has been granted permission, by Church Council, to appoint a committee to look into the possibility of installing an elevator to assist the elderly and handicapped members of the church. The members will include the building and grounds committee: Ron Reece, John Pflugfelder, Bob Zinckgraf, Don Guelich, and David Johnson, with Charley Shaffer as an architectural adviser. There is also a fund raising committee which consist of: Maxine Romig Volger, Kathy

Zinckgraf and Linda Trent. The project will probably take some time; however, we are a growing church and need to think about the needs of our present and future members.

We wish to thank you for a generous start to our Stewardship campaign for 2010. The initial pledge Sunday was \$95,680. Each year, several people do send in their pledge at a later date. As you know, our aging building and surrounding grounds some immediate attention; therefore, we re-instituted a maintenance fund commitment during the stewardship campaign. Initial commitments to that campaign for 2010 are \$8920. . Stewardship wishes to thank everyone for their support of the church and their continued commitment.

Care & Nurture

By Lila Minervino

Update on Coat Drive and Cell Phone Collection:

Care and Nurture's coat drive is going along with wonderful response from our congregation. We have a very large assortment of warm jackets, coats, vests and sweaters and some warm waterproof boots. One of our Girl Scout troops in town has added the items that they collected. We can supply both adults and children as needed. The clothing will be distributed in early January through the United Way of Warren County in both Hacketts-town and Phillipsburg. In the meantime, Pastor Dave will have access to the collection to use as he sees fit as he goes about his work with the community. If you still have items to be brought in, continue to do so until after Christmas. There is a rack outside of Erika's office to hang them.

Our cell phone collection was also very successful. We collected three large bags of phones and accessories. These will be given to Warren County Domestic Abuse Group with the co-operation of Wanda Maltese from our church. Care and Nurture wishes to thank Wanda for her help. These phones are to be re-conditioned and given to women in crisis and will be able to dial only 911 for emergencies.

A big thank you to the group of woman who cleaned and straightened the kitchen this month. What a beautiful job! Now everything has a place. Also a thank you to the women who measured, bought and installed the curtains in Fellowship Hall. They certainly add to the warmth of the room.

Have you seen the beautifully framed portraits of our three former pastors? They are a nice addition to our church and are hung in the conference for all to see.

Stewardship Campaign Update

By Rick Wilson

This year's stewardship campaign is off to a great start. The results so far are as follows:

Operating Fund: We received 36 pledges totaling \$95,680 which included 6 new pledges totaling \$5640. **Maintenance Fund:** We received 22

pledges totaling \$8920. This included 20 new pledges!

For comparison, the totals for 2009 were: Operating Fund – 44 pledges totaling \$116,276 and Maintenance Fund – 2 pledges totaling \$860.

Thank you to all who have committed funds so far. If you are interested in pledging to PVEC for 2010, please see Ron Reece.

Church in Action

Crop Walk Update

Our participation in the Crop walk was very successful. In total we had 7 walkers from PVEC and raised a total of \$491! 25% of all money raised from the Hackettstown area crop walk will be used to support the local food pantries, including the Lord's Pantry.



Members of our congregation lending a hand to beautify Frelinghuysen Twp.

Town Cleanup Update

John Jurena reports a successful cleanup effort in Frelinghuysen Twp. last week. 11 Members gave of their time including some of our youth, to beautify the area. Our church will earn \$400 to be used for youth activities because of these efforts!

Important Upcoming Events at PVEC Mark your Calendars!

Nov 29– Dedication Sunday of Special Gifts in 2009

Dec 5 - 11am, UMC Gathering with the Superintendent at PVEC

December 6 - PVEC Annual meeting immediately following Worship

December 13 - Hanging of the Greens, Care & Nurture's Christmas Party, Open house of Barbara & Ron Philipp's train sets and dollhouses.

December 19 - Christmas caroling 4PM

Christmas Eve Services – 7pm Family Service, 11pm Candlelight Service

Jan 14 - PVEC Blood Drive

Tid- Bits

Is anyone interested in teaching computers? See John Jurena for details!

Happenings Deadline

Please submit all articles by the 15th of the month for timely publication. All articles received after that date will be published in the newsletter for the following month.

Submit articles to Erika in the church office or to office@pvem.net Thank you!

Panther Valley Ecumenical Church Official Newsletter

Panther Valley Ecumenical Church
1490 Rt. 517
PO Box 463
Allamuchy, NJ 07820

Phone: 908-852-5444
Fax: 908-850-4754
Email: office@pvem.net



*"In our diversity we find common ground
in Christ"*

*Visit us on the
web at pvem.net*

Recipe Corner..

Christmas Morning Muffins

Ingredients:

- cranberries, fresh 175 g (6 oz)
- icing sugar, sifted 50 g (2 oz)
- flour, plain wholemeal 150 g (5 oz)
- flour, plain white 150 g (5 oz)
- baking powder, 15 ml (1 tbsp)
- mixed spice, ground 5 ml (1 tsp)
- salt, 2.5 ml (half tsp)
- sugar, light brown 50 g (2 oz)
- egg, 1
- milk, 250 ml (8 fl oz)
- vegetable oil, 50 ml (2 fl oz)

Instructions:

Mix the icing sugar with halved cranberries. Take a twelve cup muffin tin and grease with butter or use paper cases. In a bowl mix the brown sugar, salt, mixed spice, baking powder and both flours. Make a hole in the middle. Add a mixture of beaten egg/milk/oil into the hole and just blend. Then add the cranberries and quickly stir. The end product should be a rough mixture with lumps and air pockets visible. [Note: Instead of the cranberries you can use mincemeat (225 g, 8 oz) to put in the hole.] Take this mixture and fill the muffin cups to two thirds and bake at gas mark 4 (180 degrees centigrade, 350 F) until they are golden brown and well risen. About 20 minutes. Cool for a bit and serve warm.