



FPC News

First Presbyterian Church

December 15, 2007

Merry Christmas:

Ready or not it will happen as it always does. Sandra and I are excited that this year we will be new members of your family celebrating with you. Even though we have barely began matching names and faces, everyday it feels less strange and more 'right.' Thank you for that.

For all of us even after the "last" gift is wrapped, there remains the perennial question of what to give the one who is everything. What can we bring to the God who becomes one of us as a helpless infant? The answer of course is - everything we can. Our generosity will be the measure of the blessings we receive. May we and the baby God be inundated with blessings this holy season.

Yours in Christ's Love,
Art & Sandy King

There will be one worship service at 11am on December 23rd and 30th. The Christmas Eve Service will be at 5:30pm.

"Merry Christmas!"

How many times will you exchange such greetings with friends and family members this season? It's a time of busy activity and happy expectations --- parties, family gatherings, gift-giving, music, and decorations.

But what about those for whom the Christmas season brings a wave of sadness and sorrow? Some have recently experienced the death of a close family member, and this is the first Christmas where there will be an empty seat at the dinner table. Some are currently struggling with the loss of a job or overwhelming debt. Buying Christmas presents is a burden that adds to worries and problems. Some people are overwhelmed by poor health or depression or addiction or abuse. Others are alone for the first Christmas after a divorce; family traditions are disrupted, and anger and bitterness may replace peace and joy.

"Merry" and "Christmas" don't always go together. And so the season of Advent is more appropriate to the "real world" problems that many of us face. Advent recognizes that there is a lot wrong in our world. And Christmas is the celebration that in the midst of darkness, there glimmers the hope of the world, Jesus Christ.

You know someone for whom the lights and glitter of the holiday seem hollow this year. Give them the gift of the Christ child who "became flesh and dwelt among us." Don't ask them to "cheer up" and enter into the celebrations going on all around them, but enter instead their world of worry or guilt or anger or grief for a time. Pray with them, for comfort, for peace, for hope, for whatever it is that they need. And remember, your presence in the name of Christ is the best present of the season.



In Advent Hope,
Rev. Kathryn Dudley, Pastoral Care Associate
(356-3299)
fpcpastoralcare@windstream.net

Consecration Sunday and Covered Dish Brunch December 16th

There will be a covered dish brunch in the Harper Center Sunday, December 16th at 10:00 a.m. This will be another great opportunity for the whole church to be together for food, fun and fellowship. Bring your favorite breakfast dish!

Remember to bring your estimate of giving card to the worship service.

Christmas Gathering & Program December 16th, Harper Center

Please join us on December 16th for a short program on the Christmas Story. A Christmas Gathering will include a short concert from our wonderful choir, a shepherd's play and a narration of Jesus' birth with the youth and children. The program starts at 4:00 p.m. and will conclude with light refreshments. Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate. Please call Becky in the church office if you have any questions or would like to volunteer!

	November 2007	
	<u>Jan-Nov 07</u>	<u>Jan-Nov 06</u>
Income		
Operating Income	<u>423,294</u>	<u>503,559</u>
Total Income	423,294	503,559
Expense		
Witness	24,999	27,107
Administration	212,709	242,435
Property	128,560	134,815
Worship	6,277	2,486
Christian Education	16,941	19,064
Congregational Care	2,331	32
New Membership	86	0
Stewardship	1,212	143
Building Loan Payment	<u>75,545</u>	<u>89,631</u>
Total Expenses	467,660	515,713
Net Income	(44,366)	(12,154)
Financial Update		
• "It's Time to be Mortgage Free" Status - through 11-30-07		
Pledged	\$270,413.56	
Collected	\$308,680.87	
Match Received	\$245,100.68	
Paid on Loan Principal	\$547,000.00	
Mortgage Balance	\$7404,175.08	
Those who are matching what the congregation has pledged toward the mortgage reduction effort have now given about \$55,000 more than the congregation has given.		
• Benevolence Offerings This Year		
Bangladesh	\$2,770.13	
One Great Hour	\$1,420.34	
Pentecost	\$526.00	
PW Birthday	\$436.63	

The Christmas Joy Offering will be dedicated on Sunday, December 23rd. 50% of the offering will be given to the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to assist retired church workers and their surviving spouses, especially those who have served smaller congregations or who have faced financial difficulties.

The other 50% is given to the six Presbyterian racial ethnic schools and colleges. The Presbyterian Church has long promoted education through establishing and supporting racial ethnic schools. Some of the funds support scholarships to deserving students as well as help with basic operation costs. These institutions develop leaders in the church and society, and they enable students to discover and pursue their professional goals.

The schools and colleges are:

Barber-Scotia College in Concord, NC is primarily a preparatory school for black women. Cook School for Christian Leadership in Tempe, AZ serves Native American students

and others for leadership in church and society. Menaul School in Albuquerque, NM is a secondary school for Native American and Hispanic students. Additional courses now offer college preparatory curriculum. Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, TN is a coeducational college preparatory school preparing students from the Americas and beyond for lives of Christian leadership. Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, AK is Alaska's oldest educational institution. Designed to provide a high school education for natives in Alaska it became a college when the state assumed responsibility for public education. Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, AL was started by Dr. Charles Stillman as a school where students could "enter to learn and depart to serve." This is still the purpose of the four-year liberal arts college.

As you pray about and consider special causes to which you will give in December, remember the CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING. Envelopes are in the pew racks and will be in the bulletin on December 23.

CUOC has been serving approximately 700 families a month. Due to the steadily increasing number of families needing help the shelves at CUOC are getting bare. Could you please help by bringing some canned vegetables, small packages of spaghetti (for single person households), spaghetti sauce, tuna, canned pork and beans, peanut butter, or any other non-perishable food items to the church. The Witness Committee asks that you bring items the first Sunday of the month, along with your Pennies for Hunger. Of course, food items may be left at any time.

A container has been placed in the church office area where items requested for HAVEN house can be placed. Items especially needed are: full sized bottles of hand/body lotion, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hair brushes & combs, deodorant, hair spray, bars of soap, lip balm, new ladies underwear (all sizes), razors, emery boards, or anything else that might be needed when leaving your home with only the clothes you are wearing. This is a project sponsored by the Witness & Benevolence Committee with the support of the Session.

What's Happening in December??

Sun., Dec. 16 - 9am Contemporary Service; 9:45am Sunday School; 10am Covered Dish Brunch - Harper Center; 11am Worship; 4pm Christmas Gathering in Harper Center

Mon., Dec. 17 - Circles Meet

Tues., Dec. 18 - 9:30am Staff Meeting; 10:15am CDC Chapel

Wed., Dec. 19 - 6:30pm Contemporary Choir; 7:30pm Choir Practice

Sun., Dec. 23 - 9:45am Sunday School; 11am Worship

Mon., Dec. 24 - 12pm Church Office Closes; **5:30pm Christmas Eve Service**

Tues., Dec. 25 - Christmas Day; Church Office Closed

Wed., Dec. 26 - Church Office Closed

Sun., Dec. 30 - 9:45am Sunday School; **11am Worship**; 4pm Congregational Care Comm.; 4:30pm Christian Ed. Comm.; 7pm New Member Comm.; 7:30pm Committees Meet