

BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES

1 Garren Bittinger
9 Roveen Yoder
12 Katrina Dolly
12 Richard Helmick
12 Jeremiah Finchum
14 Kayla Helmick
15 Savannah Dayton
18 Shirley Kurtz
20 Maxine Reall
22 Brenda Liller
23 Nita Emerick
28 Dennis Brown
28 Paula Monnett



DECEMBER

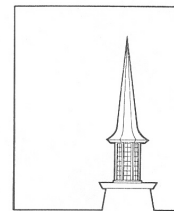
21 Lawrence & Judi Brenneman
5 Eric & Leslie Helmick

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12-14-2012

I THINK YOUR LIGHTS MIGHT BE TOO
BRIGHT THIS YEAR



CONNECTION

December 2013
Vol. 3 No. 12

PINTO MENNONITE CHURCH

"In Christ's body we're all connected to each other..."
Eph 4:25 , *The Message*



Advent Worship O, the Mystery of God's Dwelling



...in our present!

Dec. 1 . Sermon: Phil Dayton
Penny Power offering
Child Dedication- Colton Livengood

...in our relationships!

Dec. 8 Sermon: Pastor Merle
5:30 pm Children's Christmas Program

...in transformation!

Dec. 15 Sermon: Pastor Merle

...in the child that is born!

Dec. 22 Gathering Music: *Celebration*
Sermon: Pastor Merle

...in our distress!

Dec. 29 Sermon: Pastor Merle

"SACRED HARMONY" IN THE FALL MUSICALE



November 17 was the 60th Fall Musicale to be held at Pinto Mennonite Church and the day was filled with harmony. The morning worship theme was, "Now Let Us Sing" and was a time filled with songs and scripture led by Doris Ours, Judi Brenneman, Jan Livengood, and Pastor Merle.

The afternoon program featured special guests, The Valley Table Singers, from Harrisonburg, VA. This group of friends who have sung together for many years provided many harmonious moments for us to appreciate as they sang from the "Harmonia Sacra" thought to be the oldest hymn book in continuous use. Some very interesting educational tidbits about this book and its author were given as well.

The congregation was included in singing many favorite hymns from Life Songs 2 as well as others that were chosen after an earlier polling of our members for their favorites. Nellie Bradshaw provided piano accompaniment for some of that singing and Teagan Powers shared her talents in the prelude.

Visual harmony was also demonstrated in the colors and designs of the quilts which were an important part of the decorations for the day. The voices and laughter heard during the meal also provided another kind of harmony as did the table decorations in the fellowship hall. Dawn Dayton, Gail Rotruck, Jean Harsh, and Janetta Hampton all had a part in the visual displays.

Though attendance was quite small for this event, those who were able to participate were certainly blessed!



ADVENT DEVOTIONS ONLINE



Goshen College will again offer an online spiritual resource to help believers make time and space in their hearts and minds to welcome Advent and celebrate Christmas. Beginning November 25 (the Monday prior to the first Sunday in Advent) and culminating on Christmas Day, Goshen College students, faculty and staff will provide weekday reflections based on the Sunday's upcoming lectionary Scripture passages. It will be available online at www.goshen.edu/devotions, by daily email or via an RSS feed. Many writers will reflect on the Advent theme: "O the mystery of God's dwelling," taken from Mennonite Church USA worship resources.



Sacred Harmonies



CELEBRATION AT THE MANGER



For the third consecutive year, and possibly the final year, the Children's Christmas program will be presented in the outdoor setting of the Larry and Pat Liller farm.

The program is scheduled for December 8 at 5:30 pm and will feature the music and drama of the nativity.

Following the program, there will be hot chocolate and cookies to share. Dress warmly and bring your friends to enjoy this unique Christmas experience.



Photos from the 2012 program



Children's
Christmas
Program

ADVENT THEME CELEBRATES MYSTERY

O, the Mystery of God's Dwelling!

We can say our Advent worship theme title reverentially and in awe as an expression of worship for God's profound act of entering the human world, or we can say it with frustration and confusion as we try to make sense of the stupendous event of the incarnation at the heart of the season.

For most of its history, the Christian church treated Advent as a penitential season. While the culture (and many within the church) revel in a consumer frenzy that climaxes on Christmas Day, the church, when true to its calling, calls for a four-week period of introspection, a time to ponder the depth of evil's hold upon our lives and our world, and to reflect on what is required for redemption from this mess.

We are tempted to think that Christmas is over on Christmas morning, forgetting that we have the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany to revel in and celebrate with joy the mystery of what God's dwelling means to us.

The Nativity of Christ

The artwork on the front of the Sunday worship bulletins, "The Nativity of Christ" is based in the icon tradition of early Christian art. While most elements in this artwork easily correlate with modern nativity arrangements - angels, shepherds, Mary, Joseph, the Christ child, the star, and the stable animals, there are a few key features in this particular image that are worth explaining and a few that are notably different.

In the top right corner an angel proclaims the "good news" of Christ's birth to a lowly shepherd. Note the staff held by the angel signifying heavenly authority to carry this message directly from God

Two angels, opposite, bend in praise and adoration over the newborn King. Why are their hands draped with cloths? Here is a very ancient custom whereby any common person who received an audience with a king was required to cover his/her hands, thus sparing the king the unpleasant experience of seeing the calloused, dirty hands of a working class individual. In this instance, it signals to the viewer that

(Continued)

MEANINGFUL GIFTS

Our church participated generously in the Operation Shoebox gift collection, but perhaps you are looking for more options for meaningful gift-giving this season.

The bulletin board in the foyer has some brochures from agencies such as Mennonite Mission Network, MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) with giving opportunities in varying amounts to help alleviate suffering in the world. Mennonite Disaster Service will continue to be of assistance to those in the US who have had homes and lives devastated by natural disasters such as the recent tornadoes and more funding is always appreciated.

Locally, check the bulletin and listen for information on assisting the Union Rescue Mission with clothing needs for women and children in Hope House as well as other on-going needs there.



**Mennonite
Disaster
Service**



**American
Red Cross**

Union Rescue Mission®

BLOOD DRIVE

In another sense, participation in the blood drive to be held on December 19 at the Cresaptown United Methodist Church is a way to give the gift of life to someone who is in need.

This Christmas, honor someone you love with a gift that changes lives, bringing new opportunity to families. Give a gift that can change the world.

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU

For those who were not at the congregational meeting, the congregation approved a budget for next year that will be a bit tight. A major goal of the budget process was to approve a budget that would match our revenues to our expenses. This we pray that we have done.

We realistically tried to estimate our income and trimmed our expenses to meet that income. However, this year we are expecting that our expenses will exceed our income. We are anticipating a deficit of about \$9,700 this year and without any changes we will have to use the church's general fund to make up the difference.

This of course is not a sustainable solution so I ask everyone to consider increasing the amount of their giving to Pinto for the remainder of the year.

Please in your prayers ask God to show you ways that you can increase your giving to Pinto.

Wade Dorsey, Budget Committee Chair

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD GROWS AND GROWS!

In 2011 Jan Livengood collected four filled shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Last year, after more publicity and exposure of the project to the congregation, the total was 42.

This year, when the project was introduced, the 50 boxes Jan provided disappeared from the foyer before everyone left the sanctuary and she began to scramble for more. Though there were just two weeks to fill the boxes, they were gathered on Sunday morning, November 17, and dedicated with prayer. This year the total was **107 boxes** which were sent to *Samaritan's Purse* for distribution!

Thanks to all who participated and shared in this ministry of love and remember to pray for the recipients of the boxes.



the baby is royalty. We also see a second shepherd playing flute in adoration.

Christ's ultimate mission of dying for the salvation of the world are hinted at: swaddling cloths that resemble grave cloths, a cross filled halo, and a lamb reminding us of John the Baptist's words, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

But the heart of The Nativity of Christ is the scene playing out between Mary, Joseph and the old man in the shaggy coat kneeling in front of Joseph. Note that neither Mary nor Joseph gazes in amazement at the miracle God-child as a modern nativity would portray them. Instead, we see Mary quietly focused on her husband, who is seemingly engaged in an interaction with the old man. What's going on here? That old man is God's adversary, Satan, ever so gently planting the seed of doubt in Joseph. He asks, "Do you really want to get involved with this Mary and her baby? Why not quietly divorce yourself from them?" Mary watches and waits for Joseph's answer.

Joseph represents each of us - each of us must face doubt and answer the question, "Do you really want anything to do with this baby?" Mary often represents the church in icon art - Christ's church watches and waits for our answer . . . as does Christ himself.

(Taken from the resources in The Leader)

Pinto Mennonite Church

Pastor: Merle Christner
13822 Pinto Rd SW
Cumberland, MD 21502

Phone: 301-729-2714
E-mail: pintochurch@atlanticbb.net
www.pintochurch.org

DECEMBER 2013



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|-------------------|------------------------|---|-----|--------------------------------|
| 1 Sermon: Phil Dayton Penny Power offering Child Dedication | 2 6 pm Game Night | 3 7 pm Council | 4 7 pm Bible Study | 5 6:30 pm Elders 7 pm Celebration practice | 6 | 7 7 am Men's Bible Studies |
| 8 Sermon: Pastor Merle 5:30 pm Children's Program at Liller farm | 9 6 pm Game Night | 10 | 11 7 pm Bible Study | 12 | 13 | 14 7 am Men's Bible Studies |
| 15 Sermon: Pastor Merle | 16 6 pm Game Night | 17 | 18 7 pm Bible Study | 19 Noon-6 pm Blood Drive @Cresaptown UMC 7 pm Celebration practice | 20 | 21 7 am Men's Bible Studies |
| 22 Sermon: Pastor Merle Gathering Music: <i>Celebration</i> | 23 World's Attic Day 6 pm Game Night | 24 | 25 CHRISTMAS DAY | 26 | 27 | 28 7 am Men's Bible Studies |
| 29 Sermon: Pastor Merle | 30 6 pm Game Night | 31 | HAPPY NEW YEAR! | | | |