

### COMMUNION EACH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Once again, the Session has approved the celebration of communion for each Sunday service in Advent (**November 30, December 7, 14, 21**) as part of an ongoing exploration of “renewed sacramental practice,” an invitation issued by our denomination.

According to the PCUSA report “Invitation to Christ,” a season of renewed sacramental practice is intended to: refocus the church for discipleship and mission; strengthen the church’s ministries of evangelism and hospitality in an age of widespread spiritual hunger and theological confusion; refocus the church on the gospel’s call to ministries of compassion and justice; and empower our life together as we both celebrate our differences and enjoy our unity in Christ. This is, the report goes on, an “invitation to discernment, a way of inviting the church to listen together to what the Spirit of God is saying to us about our identity and mission.”

Let us, together, accept this invitation. And during this season of watching and waiting, of hoping and dreaming, let us practice receiving. Let us taste and see (that the Lord is good). Let us lift up our hearts and our minds, and *listen, listen, listen* to what the Spirit may be saying to us, in this time and this place, and let us be ready to share with one another what we taste and see and hear.

—Ethel Hornbeck, Parish Assistant for Spiritual Formation

### Christmas Joy Gift Dinner

*The whole congregation together in one place at one time*

**Sunday, December 14** at 5:00 p.m., Shepherdstown Fire Hall

Guests of Honor: New Members Class of 2008

Recognition and Release of all Committee, Guild, and Crew Members

Hands-on service activity for children • “The Twelve Days”

The Joy Gift Offering is dedicated to our church’s racially ethnic schools and medical supplement for retired Presbyterian ministers and missionaries. (The racially ethnic schools and colleges offer a training ground by which leadership development can take place, where racially ethnic people can gain the confidence and skills that they need to go out into the broader society and take their place.)

Dishes and flatware, plus ham, chicken and beverages provided. Bring a food dish to serve 12. Food assignments per last name: A-F dessert, G-L vegetable or salad, M-Z main dish. Volunteers needed to: set-up at 12:30 p.m. and clean-up after dinner; arrange table decorations; make coffee at SPC and transport to Fire Hall. Please contact Esther Murphy, 304-876-8133, or [esther\\_murphy@comcast.net](mailto:esther_murphy@comcast.net).

### CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY SERVICES

#### Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

- 5:00 p.m. Especially for children
- 8:00 p.m. Choirs and homily
- 11:00 p.m. Carol sing and communion

*Offering divided between JCCM and the Presbyterian Disaster Fund*

#### ONE SERVICE ONLY (10:45)

**December 28** (Children’s Pageant, see below) and **January 4**

**IT’S PAGEANT TIME AGAIN! December 28.** Calling all SPC children: your talents are needed. We have parts for everyone—speaking, non-speaking, sound effects, two legged or four. Middle school band, we need your help also to make this phenomenal.

Practices will be incorporated into the Sunday Studio **December 14 and 21**. We ask parents to allow children to stay until about 12:30, **December 21**. We also have a practice on **Saturday, December 27** from 10:00–11:00 a.m. These practices are very important since we have an all-new pageant. But even if you can only make the day of the pageant, we can fit your child in a part. Sign ups are on November 30 and December 7 after church, or contact Karen Waugh 304-876-2585, [lkwaugh@comcast.net](mailto:lkwaugh@comcast.net).

## LOVE IN ACTION: MY TRIP TO BOTSWANA

*Every day is a good day. I wake up prepared only for good days.*

If I could sum up my experience of volunteering in Botswana at a Day Care for kids whose parents have HIV/AIDS, it would be inspiring. I hadn't been there but five minutes before the children captured my heart. Mesmerized by my arm hair and soft head hair (apparently they don't see too many white folks with these features which are different from what they're used to), they started picking at my arm and rubbing my hair, giggling all the while.

Throughout my month in Botswana I would continually be blessed by their giggles and smiles. One would never know the pain in their lives by the spirit of joy these kids have. The spirit of Africa in general was utterly inspiring. Never before have I seen so much dancing and singing and smiling. Indeed, God had much to say to me in Africa and Africa had for me an inspiring song to sing to my heart.

Of course there is pain in Africa too. Chester is a five-year old boy infected with HIV. His mother is dying of the disease and I'm not sure of the status of his three-year old sister. Every day, Chester wakes his little sister up, dresses her, puts her shoes on, and holds her hand as they walk to Day Care together. He helps put her down for nap time, then wakes her up, and puts her shoes back on. At the end of the day, he tells his sister it's time to go and holds her hand as they walk back home. This is a five-year old boy!

For me, I saw God in the spirit of the people. I met more happy people in Africa than I have anywhere else. Everyone smiles, it seems, and to hear African song and dance is to hear a passion and beauty not to be surpassed. I took a journey through the Kalahari Desert to the city of Maun. From there I went into the bush to a place called Boro in the Okavango Delta where I spent the day with a local fisherman. There is no electricity or running water in Boro. The homes are made of termite mounds and pop cans, with straw roofs. I made good friends with Matheo, the fisherman, and he welcomed me to his home for dinner. I was so touched as we sat on empty fuel cans around one bowl and ate our meal with our hands. I realized that while I was the white tourist with all the money, I had nothing to offer. I did not know how to navigate my way through the desert; I did not know how to cook the meal over the open fire or how to slaughter the goat. Nor did I know language of the village. I was completely dependent of Matheo. This was both humbling and touching. Throughout my month, I was welcomed into so many homes. The hospitality was incredible.

I didn't come away with an answer to the question: "Why do bad things happen to good people," but I did come away utterly inspired by the strength and kindness with which God has blessed these people. And I also came away knowing that the many people I met who, from afar, we feel sorry for, do not in reality want us to feel sorry for them. Nor are they deeply sad like we

may assume. They are blessed in a way we never could be with all of our material wealth. Also, they have a joy in and reliance on the Lord that can only amaze us. As a lady infected with HIV/AIDS and facing many other challenges in her life told me, "Every day is a good day. I wake up prepared only for good days."

—Brandon Dennison, SPC Assistant for Youth

## Yootz Corner...

### HELP NEEDED FAMILIES FOR CHRISTMAS

SPC is sponsoring 4 families, including three single moms. The children's ages are: 2 months, 6 months, 5, 7, and 10. None of the moms or the one father now has any income. Some recently lost their jobs. The SPC Yootz will be shopping on December 13 for those families. Please make a donation at the "LoveWorks" table in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, **November 30 or December 7**, or contact Charlotte Baker-Shenk to purchase a specific item on the list. Bakershenk@aol.com.

**ROCK-A-THON December 12, 7:00 p.m.** The Yootz will be *rocking out* in rocking chairs for an entire night. For each hour rocked, donors will pledge a certain amount of food to be donated to local food pantries. Of course, we'll have plenty of fun, too, with live music, wild games, poverty awareness activities, and a late night shopping trip to Walmart for our Christmas families.

## Mark Your Calendars...

**WAITING IN DARKNESS** *Carrying the Light: Transition, Loss, Grief and Healing.* An Advent Spirituality Retreat at Rolling Ridge with Janelle Rhorer and Jackie Sabath, **Friday, December 5–Sunday, December 7**. Truly it is in darkness that one finds the Light. So when we are in sorrow, then the Light is nearest to all of us.

Cost is \$100 with scholarships available. Send \$25 deposit to Rolling Ridge Study Retreat Community (RRSRC) c/o Jackie Sabath, 129 Jubilee Lane, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425. For more information contact Jackie Sabath at 304-261-2653, or jsabath@rollingridge.net.

**SUNDAY FORUMS** 9:40–10:20 a.m. Fellowship Hall.

**November 30:** "Assisting Hispanic Community." To discuss concrete volunteer opportunities for the Eastern Panhandle Hispanic community. Both Spanish and non-Spanish speakers are needed for assisting with English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction (training will be provided), pre-GED tutoring, and translation assistance for individuals navigating public sector administrative tasks (school registration, local government offices). Also an opportunity for interdenominational cooperation, working with members and staff of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Martinsburg.

**December 7:** Brandon Dennison's report and pictures on Botswana.

**December 14:** Report on Northern Ireland peace mission.

**SHEPHERDSTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT** annual Christmas open house and FREE Community dinner on **Sunday, December 7**, noon to 3:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend. Santa is the special guest of the day. There will be free gifts for children, fire safety literature, and fire & ambulance displays.

## SPC Monthly Activities...

**TAIZE SERVICE** First Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. A Service of Prayer in song, silence and candlelight. **Next: December 3.**

**WOMEN'S CIRCLE** First Thursdays, 10:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall. All women of the church are invited to attend. The Horizons Bible Study for 2008-09 is *Jubilee! Luke's Gospel for the Poor*. Study books are in the church office. **Next: December 4.**

**COLLEGE STUDENT FELLOWSHIP** including dinner and discussion with Pastor Tremba. First and Third **Thursdays** at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. (No third Thursday this month) **Next: December 4.**

**CHURCH 101** *The Heart of Christianity* with Pastor Tremba. First Saturdays, 9-10:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall. Two parts each time. Topical discussion and any and all questions. **Next: December 6.**

**FIRST THINGS FIRST SUNDAY** Coins for relief of hunger and non-perishables for JCCM (see list under **Notices: JCCM**). **Next: December 7.**

**CHURCH 201** with Pastor Tremba & Ethel Hornbeck. Discussion of *Quest for the Living God* by Elizabeth Johnson. Books (\$25). Pay what you can. Second **Wednesdays** at 7:30 p.m. **December 10, January 14, February 11, March 11, April 8.**

**CANTERBURY SERVICES**, second Thursday of the month at 10:30 a.m. **Next: December 11.**

**ROUNDTABLE WITH ETHEL HORNBECK** Conversation and reflection with and around scripture, poetry and other selected texts. Fourth Thursdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m. in the balcony. (Note: Third Thursday for this month) **Next: December 18.**

**SUPPER GROUP TGIF**, **Friday, December 19**, 6:30 p.m. at Cathy & Don Cross's, 304-876-2412. Bring a wrapped gift (not new) for Yankee Swap.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST** Third Saturdays. Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Discussion 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. **Next: December 20.**

**CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER** Third Sundays, balcony, 7:00 p.m. **Next: December 21.**

## Notices...

**POINSETTIAS** Would you like to donate a poinsettia for the sanctuary during the Christmas Season? They can be picked up after December 24 or donated to

someone else. \$10 each. Forms are in the bulletin. Make check to SPC; memo, poinsettia. Deadline is **Dec. 14.**

**JCCM** (Jefferson County Community Ministries) is experiencing many more requests for help. Current pantry needs:

- **(High need)** Baby foods—vegetables, fruits, meats (Stages 1,2,3 and toddler). Be sure to check expiration labels.
- Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Bath soap (Dial, Zest, Ivory, etc.)
- 1 lb. canned hams
- Decaf tea bags
- Canned meats (Spam, Treet, beef stew, chicken & dumplings, etc.)
- Coffee (instant and perked, regular and decaf)

**PAPER RECYCLING** 4-H group at Christ Reformed Church, 8-9:15 a.m. Paper, cardboard, magazines, books. Place in paper bags, boxes, or tie securely. **NO PLASTIC BAGS.** **Next: December 6.**

**SHENANDOAH WOMEN'S CENTER** After being closed for several months due to some needed repairs, the Center in Martinsburg is open again to offer a haven for children and women who are victims of domestic violence. SPC has traditionally collected needed items each month. Most urgent ongoing needs include: pre-paid long distance phone cards, Martins/Walmart/Food Lion/Sheetz gift cards, *used cell phones (with or without charger)*, laundry detergent (powder), shower gel, ACT Fluoride rinse, waxed dental floss, pain relievers for adults and children, cold/flu medicine, cough syrup and drops, lice treatment kits, baby wipes, and diapers.

At Christmas in particular, they need *NEW* gifts: children's toys and games; women's and children's warm hats, gloves, scarves, hair brushes, toothbrushes; and women's jewelry, soaps, lotions, etc.

*Place items in the red basket in the Fellowship Hall next to JCCM items. Please do NOT donate clothing!* **Deadline: Sunday, December 14.**

**WEST WALL WETNESS FROM WIND AND WATER** Over the next few weeks, Mike Henderson will be repairing more plaster and repainting sections of the sanctuary walls. This is not repeating the repairs made two years ago; those have held fine. These are new areas damaged by water infiltration. We have made repairs to window frames, drainage and brickwork on the exterior of the west wall; now it makes sense to finish the job on the inside.

## Keeping up with Members...

Christine Kay is published in *The Green Rolling Hills, Writings from West Virginia*, an extraordinary anthology of short stories. The collection received a very good review in the West Virginia Writers Roundtable. It's available at Amazon.

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## Snippets of Old Shepherdstown...

*That which is forgotten returns to the circling wind.*  
~ Navajo Wind Chant

SPC Christmastime Flashbacks 1938–1945

~Smell of cedar throughout church building.

~SS teachers choosing children for pageant parts. No doll ever put into the manger—only a bright light bulb. No idol for Baby Jesus.

~After school pageant practice. Church cold. Keep coats on. Coal furnace kept banked during week. Tough economic times and WW II sacrifices.

~Cedar Christmas tree in balcony decorated with paper cutouts of snowflakes, stars, angels, and draped with colorful paper chains with links glued with flour and water paste.

~After the pageant: to the balcony for presents. Children seated on little chairs; parents gathered behind. This tradition was presided over by Dean A. D. Kenamond, Superintendent of our SS. Uncle Bob McKee on his knees under the tree calling off the names on the gift tags, and each child receiving a small gift.

~Each child also given an oblong box (with a cotton string for carrying) containing nuts, chocolate drops, hard candy, gumdrops, and a tangerine (Oh, the Christmasy smell!).

~Walking home with loving parents; spirits uplifted; contemplating the BIG NIGHT

~Unaware that for one or two this was their BIG NIGHT.

—Jim Price

**SING-A-LONG** with Carol Wood and Rie Wilson at O'Hurleys, **Sunday, December 7**, 2:00 -4:00 p.m.

## Thank You...

I would like to say thanks to the church members for helping me back in August with rides and meals. My family truly appreciated your help. I thank you from my heart. Please keep my family in your prayers as I continue to face the uncertainty that goes with cancer. Thanks to everyone.

—Barkley Sutherland

## Financial Corner...

**GENERAL FUND** through November 23. Expected: \$248,560. Actual giving: \$245,885. Building Fund pledged for 2008: \$27,000. Submitted to date: \$29,988.

**2009 OFFERING ENVELOPES** available in December. Please check with the office if yours is missing. Also, if you haven't returned your 2009 pledge form yet, please do so by **December 7**.

**PRESBYTERIAN INVESTMENT & LOAN PROGRAM (PILP)**. You get a good return on your investment while helping SPC (rebate on our mortgage) plus other Presbyterian churches. Visit: [www.pcusa.org/pilp/](http://www.pcusa.org/pilp/).

**NEXT NEWSLETTER: January 2009**. Announcements, articles or news on our members? Contact the office, 304-876-6466 or <[office@spcworks.org](mailto:office@spcworks.org)> Copy deadline **December 31**.

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