

### WEATHER-RELATED CANCELLATIONS

Check web page or call the church 304-876-6466 for a message. On Sundays, changes are posted on web page by 7:00 a.m. Even if the 8:15 service is cancelled, the 10:45 rarely is. In the absence of official leadership, those who can make it in safely may use the Sunday bulletin for an informal service.

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

As I contemplate taking on both new and greater responsibilities here at SPC, I can't help but pause in wonder at how in the world I got here; how did I manage this most unlikely move from a 20-year career as an energy economist to a vocation in ministry, and specifically, parish ministry? (Although, as I like to point out, economics and theology do actually have much in common—both like to pretend to be sciences while ignoring their grounding in human experience, and both use a lot of Latin to cover up the fact that each discipline ultimately begins and ends in Mystery.)

It is no small irony that much of my adult spiritual journey—and ultimately graduate study in spiritual direction and spirituality—was sparked by a deep and profound disenchantment with church life, and the terrible destructiveness I had seen and experienced in various dysfunctional congregations.

In fact, I was in crisis when I first sought spiritual direction for myself; I very quickly realized, however, that this was something I was already doing with others in various spiritual friendships that had come my way. Eventually I entered a two-year graduate certificate program in spiritual direction with the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. My work with Shalem led me deeper into a whole new world of theology, spirituality and contemplative spiritual practice, and I could not get enough. I continued this path in studies at the Washington Theological Union, a progressive, ecumenical Roman Catholic seminary run by contemplative religious orders. For four years I commuted from the Eastern Panhandle to DC and eventually earned a Masters Degree in Spirituality Studies. This is a brand new academic field that combines the study of scripture, theology, and history in an integrated exploration of lived religious experience. I cherished every minute of this adventure, all the while puzzling about where it might lead.

Pretty much the minute my studies were complete, Pastor Tremba, who has a particular genius for seeing possibilities where others do not, began a conversation with me that went something like this: what do you plan to DO about all this, here at SPC? I have no idea, I replied, but I'm willing to explore. A few small volunteer tasks became a few regular paid hours, and eventually evolved into what is today a half-time position that we have called "Director of Spiritual Formation."

I am a bit of an outlier in Presbyterian circles—I am not a Minister of Word and Sacrament, nor a Christian Educator, although I may find myself at times doing the work of both. I still consider my core identity in ministry as a spiritual director, something I've been doing for a dozen years now, and which, more than anything else, is a ministry of listening—listening to God in the midst of listening to others. Over time, I have come to see this orientation as quite fruitful in a parish setting. And I am grateful to be in a church so willing to embrace the claim of its tradition, to be "reformed and always being reformed."

If I've learned anything over time, it is that God has a pretty amazing sense of humor. I came to SPC, wounded, nearly ready to give up on church altogether, and in any case, determined to hide forever in the pews. You can see how well THAT worked out.

I know I still have lots to learn, and most of what I learn I do so by listening. So please feel free to be in touch. What are you curious about? Longing for? What is the Spirit up to in your life? What do you see God doing—or not doing—here at SPC? What other questions can we explore together?

I hope to say more about some of these topics: spirituality, spiritual direction, and spiritual formation in future reflections. Stay tuned. And stay in touch. ehornbeck@frontiernet.net.

—Ethel Hornbeck, Director of Spiritual Formation & Campus Ministry

*Editor's note: In 2004, Ethel began working a few hours a week in support of liturgy planning and adult education programs at SPC. This has increased steadily over the last five years; with the addition of campus ministry to other areas of responsibility, she and SPC's Session have agreed to a half-time commitment for 2010.*

## Yootz Corner...

### D.C. URBAN POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS TRIP

Friday evening through Sunday, January 29–31.

Friends are welcome! This trip is a great opportunity to meet and greet people that lead very different lives than most of us in Shepherdstown. It's also a chance to serve others through the food bank, soup kitchens, delivering food, cleaning apartments, as well as possibly hearing some homeless people tell their story. Costs \$60 per person. Contact Jeff Hornbeck, [jhornbeck@frontiernet.net](mailto:jhornbeck@frontiernet.net), or Natasha Baihly, [natashabaihly@yahoo.com](mailto:natashabaihly@yahoo.com) for more details.

**WREATH MAKING** On Sunday, December 6, some members of SPC got a real treat. Not like candy but a fun workshop. Dave Saville from Morgantown taught us how to make wreaths. I never knew so much could go into making something that may seem simple to some. He gave us step-by-step instructions on how to make a really nice Christmas Wreath. He provided all of the greenery, wire and metal wreath frames. There were three major steps in wreath making.

First, attach the green wire to the metal wreath frame. Don't cut a long length of wire; just leave the whole thing attached. Second, prepare your greenery for the wreath. Snip the pine or whatever you are using into small bunches the same size. This step takes the longest, but if you cut the greens into small bunches, it goes a lot quicker.

Now the third step. Position the first bunch on the wreath frame and wrap the wire around it several times securely. Then position your second bunch on top of the first bunch but down an inch or so. Wrap and secure this bunch. Continue to position the bunches of pine one at a time in the same direction and wrap securely until there are no holes or empty spots.



Wreath Making at the train station

At this point comes the really fun part—decorating. You can use pinecones, holly sprigs, small tree ornaments, jingle bells, etc. Now your wreath is ready for hanging. You don't need to attach a hanger because the wire frame is sturdy enough.

We appreciate the time and effort Dave Saville gave us in teaching us the art of wreath making. Mine has not fallen apart yet and still looks nice!!

—Addison Murdock

## Mark Your Calendars...

**SUNDAY SEMINAR** *Countering Pharaoh's Production-Consumption Society Today* a DVD-based study with Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggeman who says: "it is a journey from slavery to covenant that we keep making over and over again...(because) Pharaoh has immense power always to draw us back into slavery." Come join in this timely conversation **January 10, 17, 24 and 31** at 9:15 in the Fellowship Hall.

**COMMUNITY CHOIR FESTIVAL** in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., New St. United Methodist Church, **Sunday, January 31**, 4:00 p.m. Come support SPC, other church and community choirs and the dream of Dr. King.

**PRE-LENT RETREAT** at Priestfield, **Friday, February 12**. Details to follow.

## SPC Monthly Activities...

**EVENING PRAYER** In the way of Taizé. First Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. A Service of Prayer in song, silence and candlelight. **Next: January 6**.

**WOMEN'S CIRCLE** meets first Thursdays, 10:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall. All women of the church are invited to attend our annual soup and salad luncheon on **January 7**.

**SHEPHERD PRESBYTERIAN CONNECTIONS** with college students. Includes dinner and discussion with Pastor Tremba and Ethel Hornbeck. Second and fourth **Tuesdays** at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. **Next: January 12 & 26**.

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

**ROUNDTABLE WITH ETHEL HORNBECK** Conversation and reflection with and around scripture, poetry, and other selected texts. Third Thursdays, 10:00–11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary. **Next: January 21**.

### SUPPER GROUP

Moveable Feast, **Saturday, January 9**, 6:30 p.m. at Karen Davison's home, 304-876-9191.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST** Third Saturdays. Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Discussion 8:00–9:00 a.m. **Next: January 16**.

**CONTEMPLATIVE AND CENTERING PRAYER** Third Sundays, 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. **Next: January 17**.

## Notices...

**PREVENT MASS POINSETTIACIDE** You are welcome to take home or give away a poinsettia from the church. Even if you didn't purchase one, there are plenty to spare and they will eventually be thrown away.

**SPC USHERS** In the Christian discipleship of hospitality and care, hundreds of members and guests are welcomed to SPC by its wonderful ushers. Newly ordained Deacon Suzanne Swartz accepted the appointment to lead the SPC Usher Guild. She schedules ushers for each Sunday, and for funerals and memorial services, special events and concerts. It would be helpful for Suzanne to have some additional names for her list. If you would like to greet and meet and extend the love of our church at its doors, please contact Suzanne at 304-876-6723 or [sswartz@frontiernet.net](mailto:sswartz@frontiernet.net).

**TYPEWRITER NEEDED** If you have a working typewriter that you'd like to sell or give away, please email [rnrcoy@frontiernet.net](mailto:rnrcoy@frontiernet.net).

**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: February 6.**

**CLOTHES IN STAIRWAY NEAR NURSERY** Please do not bring any more clothes or shoes at this time other than when specific requests are made. We are not set up to manage them and the stairway is overflowing. You may take clothes directly to the Martinsburg Rescue Mission.

**HANDBELL CHOIR EXPLORATION** Thanks to the generous gift Jim & Nancy Macdonell, we now have a beautiful set of Belgium handbells. Would you like to learn about forming and leading a handbell choir? If so, contact Kari Edge, [kedge01@shepherd.edu](mailto:kedge01@shepherd.edu), or the office, [Kathy@spcworks.org](mailto:Kathy@spcworks.org).

## Keeping up with Members...

*Excerpts from Emails from Ellie (traveling in India):*

**December 19** So far, Delhi is awesome. There are now five of us traveling around and I am loving all the advice from the three Peace Corps volunteers. We have been eating lots of street food and I am happy to report no sickness (yet). We are all in love with the Masala Chia tea. We have had fun and lots of success haggling for beautiful gems!

We saw the India gate and some WWI monuments. Lately, we have just been wandering the streets, looking in shops, and enjoying Kingfisher beer. We befriended an elderly man in a block printing shop who gave us all free henna on our hands.

We leave for Bikaner and our camel safari on Dec. 23.

**December 23** So after two straight days of being in bed in Delhi due to some lovely bug (lovingly called "Delhi-Belly" by my fellow travelers), it is time to move on...

Tonight we are headed to Bikaner by bus (no, it's NOT a sleeper bus!! ahhh) A lovely 12 hour bus ride—but the camel rides we'll be taking will be much worth the ride!

Since I've been in bed, I don't have many exciting stories yet—unless bathing in water so cold it makes you scream is exciting??

**January 2** After a 12 hour bus ride in a non-sleeper, local bus, we made it to Bikaner. What a relief to be on our feet again and away from the cramped bus where we were the only foreigners.

There was a temple in town—the only one where they still pray in Sanskrit. What we saw and heard was so beautiful, I cried. I have never felt so connected to [God] before. There is also a gift made in the temple. The priests throw out a mixture—holy water, pieces of mint plant, and flower bits. The mint is the luckiest part of the mixture. So, I'm standing there crying, completely unaware that the chant is over (because I don't speak Sanskrit) and I am whacked, smack in the middle of my face, with what felt like a whole cup of holy water. I'm searching my hair desperately for any small morsel of mint. Then, a local woman behind me tapped me and excitedly pointed to my shoulder. Right there sat a huge clump of mint plant. Many locals save up their "luck," or you can share it. I ate a few pieces, then passed it to all the women standing by me. I made many friends that day. The whole experience was awesome.

Thirty km outside of Bikaner, there is a temple where the rats are holy, and legend has it that if the rats run across your feet, it is good luck. Let me tell you, I am now luckier than an entire field of 4-leaf clovers!

In Bikaner, we also did our camel safari. I never realized how totally weird camels are, like something that should have been in a *Star Wars* movie. We rode till mid afternoon, when the sun was too hot to stand. After a short nap in the shade, we headed off on our camels and rode to the sand dunes to enjoy a sunset like no other I have ever seen!

*Editor's note: Ellie has wonderful stories about her adventures—too many for the newsletter. So you will just have to ask her about them when she returns.*

—Peace, Ellie Lloyd

**ROBBIE BARRAT'S** PyroBots team won first place in the WV Lego League championship in the research category for their work investigating recyclable green tires. Ask Robbie about it.

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## Mission...

*Place items for these three missions in the containers at the bottom of stairs on the way to the nursery:*

**JCCM** (Jefferson County Community Ministries) is experiencing many more requests for help. Current pantry needs: toothpaste, regular instant coffee, jelly, pancake mix, crackers, canned meat, canned fruit, applesauce.

**SHENANDOAH WOMEN'S CENTER** Most urgent needs include: paper towels, paper plates, toilet paper, tissues, paper and plastic cups; pain relievers and cold/flu medicine for adults, children and infants.

**HISPANIC MISSION FOOD OUTREACH** Most requested items include: rice; dry (not canned) pinto beans, potatoes, salt, sugar, cooking oil, and coffee.

## Thank You...

SPC Congregation,

My life will never be the same as it was when I was part of all your lives, but I am filled with the joy and hope of Christmas and hope you all are too. Much love to all!  
—Joan Kenney

My family and I agree that Phil would have loved the celebration of his life at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church. The caring of many hands was expressed in music, taping, ushering, serving, setting up, clearing and cleaning. You are special in our life. It is hard without Phil. But the future is hopeful, I know, because we have grandchildren: Paul and Will in Baltimore; Michael and Kay in Raleigh; Colin, Adam and Grace in Chagrin Falls. Thank

you for continuing to share your love with us. We wish you the peace, hope, joy and love that you have offered us. Always.

—Lily Hill

## Financial Corner...

**GENERAL FUND** through December 31, 2009. Expected to date: \$283,500. Actual giving: \$284,174. Building Fund pledged for 2009: \$34,400. Submitted to date: \$36,450.

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE:** \$2775.41 to be divided equally between JCCM and Bluefields, Nicaragua.

**JOY GIFT** offering of \$497 is dedicated to the Presbyterian church's racially ethnic schools and medical supplement for retired Presbyterian ministers and missionaries.

**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: February 2010.** Announcements, articles or news about our members? Contact the office, 304-876-6466 or [office@spcworks.org](mailto:office@spcworks.org). Copy deadline **January 27**.

**Visit [www.spcworks.org](http://www.spcworks.org)** on a regular basis for all the latest news, podcasts (new), calendar events and much more.